THE ZEALOUS CHRISTIAN, Taking Heaven BY HOLY VIOLENCE:

In severall

SERMONS

Tending to direct men

How { To hear with Zeal, / To pray with importunity.

Preached by that faithfull servant of JESUS CHRIST,

Mr. CHRISTOPHER LOVE,

Late Minister of *Laurence Jury*

LONDON.

—*The violent take it by force*, Mat. 11. 12.

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To the CHRISTIAN READER.

To the Christian Reader.

Reader,

THE good acceptance which this Authors Treatises, (already published by us) have found, and the good successe they have had among the people of

A God,

God, together with the importunate desires of many godly persons that were [illegible] of these SERMONS, have put us upon recommending them to the World. The subject of these Sermons is not only Pious, but Seasonable. *Everything* (saith *Solomon*) *is beautiful in its season*, *Eccles.* 3. 11. The times wherein we live are famous for a *Form of godliness*, and no lesse infamous for the want of the *Power* of it. Nothing is more common then for men to hear, and pray, and perform the outside duties of Religion. Nothing more rare then for men to do these things as becomes the Gospel. Men have so inured themselves to disputes about the Circumstantials of Worship, that Substantials are lost in the scuffle. And therefore it is commendable in a Minister to reduce the

thoughts

thoughts and hearts of people from needlesse controversies to the practicals of Christianity. As Socrates was commended for bringing down Philosophie from high and sublime speculation, to use and practice.

It was the care of this Reverend Author, not so much to gratifie the fancies of men, as to work upon their affections; and to direct them in the ordering of their conversation: and that the latter, because he observed most men had more heat in their Brains, then in their Hearts. That zeal that only appeared in the Professions of this Nation, is evaporated. That violence that sometimes was in the people of this Nation after Sermons and all Ordinances, is now abated, and grown remisse, nay, in some, the hatred wherewith they hate the Ordinances and people of God,

is greater then ever was the love wherewith they loved them. That praying Spirit, that not long ago was shed abroad in the hearts of Gods people, is now, as it were departed.

It is therefore high time to beseech this careless Nation, or rather the Professors of this Nation, with their message which God sent to the Church of Ephesus, *Remember from* Rev. 2. 5. *whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works, or else I will come quickly unto thee, and remove thy Candlestick out of his place.*

And oh, may these lasting Sermons be at last to revive those sparks of zeal and importunity, that lie as it were under the ashes. That was the end which the Author aimed at when he preached them to his Congregation, and that is a main end that we look to and hope for in the pub-

publication of them. The times wherein we live are times of much hypocrisie. There are many among us *that say they are Jews, and are not*, that have a *name to live, and are dead*: yea, there are many that *serve in the religion*, and yet not only deceive others, but *deceive their own selves*. And therefore it is time for every man to search and trie *if there be any way of wickednesse in him*. All is not gold that glisters, nor are all Saints that so call themselves, or are so called by others.

Rev. 2.9. 3.1.

Psal. 139.23.

Here then is a Touch-stone by which you may examine your selves. Here is a Balance of the Sanctuary, wherein you may weigh your graces, and see whether they be light or no. It is one of the vainest and most foolish things in the world for men to cheat themselves of eternall happinesse. We

count

count it folly for a man to suffer himself to be cheated in a bargain, and yet what is lost in one bargain may be regained in another. But here he that is cheated, is cheated irrecoverably. The losse of the soul is inseparable. Precious is the redemption of souls, and it ceaseth for ever. And yet there is a strange stupidity among the sons of men, whereby they are willing to be deceived, and jugled out of their soul-happinesse. They are willing to rest themselves upon any groundlesse presumption, though it be so weak that they dare not put it to triall in their own hearts, themselves being judges. O all you poor deluded souls, *How long will you love vanity, and follow after lies?* Psal. 4. When you may go a sure way, why will you run a hazard? Awake therefore. O thou that sleepest, and seriously betake thy self to this weighty

weighty, necessary and profitable duty of examination; and in this work we hope this Treatise will be usefull and acceptable; which if it be done, and the other branch not left undone, the Authors desire in preaching is satisfied, and our expectation in publishing answered, and that both those ends may be obtained, is the earnest desire of

Those that seek not yours, but you.

EDMUND CALAMY.
SIMEON ASHE.
JER. WHITAKER.
WILL. TAYLOR.
MATTHEW POOL.

MATTHEW 11. 12.

And from the dayes of John *the Baptist untill now, the Kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.*

Sermon Preacht at Lawrence Jury, April 22, 1649. SERMON I.

THis Text is part of the large commendation that Christ gives of the person and Ministery of *John* the Baptist. *John* was a crier in the wilderness to publish the glory of Christ, and Christ an Herauld to proclaim the praise of *John*. And this he doth,

The Context opened.

1 For his constancy in the doctrine of Religion, *vers. 7. What went you out to see? a reed shaken with the winde?* a light, fickle, and inconstant Preacher, that like a reed

Verse 7.

turnes with every winde of doctrine. *John* was no such man, not like a reed, to yield to the stream or blast of every winde, but like the oake or cedar that stands unmoveably in the midst of the greatest stormes.

3. For his holinesse and high mortification, *vers.* 8. *What went you out to see? A man cloathed in soft raiment?* *John* was no such man. He was not at all addicted to the garbe and pompe of the Court, but *He had a raiment of camels hair, and a leathern girdle about his loines*, *Matth.* 3. 4.

Verse 8.

3. By comparing him with the former Prophets, with those Teachers that went before him, *vers.* 9. *What went you out to see? a Prophet? Yea, I say to you, and more than a Prophet.* & *v.* 11: *Verily I say unto you. Amongst them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater then John the Baptist.* He gives him the precedency above all his predecessours, not in regard of the dignity of his office, but in respect of the perspicuity of his doctrine. Yet lest he might be proud himselfe, or others too much admire him, it is added by way of qualification in the end of the 11 *verse*, *He that is least in the Kingdome of heaven is greater then he.* Those Disciples and Apostles that should live after the resurrection of Christ, (from whence the Gospel or Kingdom of heaven is dated) should be greater then *John*, in regard of that full knowledge and clear manifesta-

Verse 9.

Verse 11.

tion

tion they should have of Christ.

2. He commends him for the successefulnesse of his Ministery, and that is set forth in the Text: *From the dayes of John the Baptist the Kingdome of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force.* A little for the explication of the Text.

By the Kingdome of heaven] is not meant the glorious seat of the blessed Angels, but the Evangelicall state of the Christian Church. [a] It signifies the preaching of the Gospel, and propagation of the Church. [b] It notes that state and condition of the Church which is properly called Christian. The Kingdome of heaven is in Scripture interpreted a breaking off from the observation of the Ceremoniall law, and a publishing of the Gospel by *John* the Baptist, and so it begun when *John* did first preach the Gospel. And whereas *Matthew* cals it, *Matth.* 3. 2. *John preached, saying, Repent, for the Kingdome of heaven is at hand. Mark* cals this, *The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, Mark* 1. 1. And therefore it is that *John* is called an Evangelicall Preacher.

The Text opened. *Cœlum Empyreum.*

a *Regnum cœlorum denotat prædicationem Evangelii, & propagationem Ecclesiæ.* Parœus.

b *Regnum Dei significat statum, & conditionem Ecclesiæ, quæ propriè Christiana dicitur.* Camero in Mat. 18. 1.

Suffereth violence] Violence is not to be taken as it is in our dayes of opposition, and as in the dayes of persecution; as it is in our dayes in opposition to right and justice, and as it was at the first comming in of the Gospel, when the wicked men of the world

did go about to oppose and obstruct the publishing of the Gospel, but it is an holy violence whereby men presse forward to obtain the grace of this Kingdome. And so it is generally taken to be an holy violence of affection, or a gracious disposition that was implanted and wrought in the hearts of many men in *John* Baptists dayes.

Violence is here opposed to lukewarmnesse and moderation in Religion, to that coldnesse and frozennesse that is in the hearts of men under the preaching of the Word. It is called an holy violence, to distinguish between them that were Christians indeed and other men; to distinguish them from the Scribes and Pharisees that were cold and frozen under the Ministery of the Gospel. They were so earnest after Christ in the Gospel, that no difficulties or discouragements could take them off from their pursuits after Christ. * They were so greedy of Christ, that no force could pluck them away, but they would rather die then be drawn away from the Gospel. It is a metaphor taken from warriours, who force their passage into a City, and take it by storm, and divide the spoil. The parallel phrase is, *Luk.* 16. 16. *Every man presseth into the Kingdome of God.*

Adeo avidi di sunt ut nulla vi rbstrahi possunt, sed potius moriuntur quam abstrahantur ab Evangelio. Luther.

For the period of time wherein this violence was declared and expressed; it was in the 15th. year of *Tiberius*, as you read, *Luk.* 3. 1.

Luke 3. 1. in the 29th. yeare of Christ.

Many doctrines may be raised from these words, but I shall not multiply observations. The first and main doctrine is taken from the time wherein this violence was, and the doctrine is this.

Doct.

At the first promulgation of the Gospel the preaching of the Word was more successefull, multitudes of men did expresse more holy violence and vehemency of affection towards the service and worship of God then in any age beside. From the dayes of *John* the Baptist untill now the Kingdome of heaven suffereth violence.

Frigebant sub ministerio legis Scribarum & Pharisæorum, fervebant sub ministerio Joannis. Muscul.

The people were cold and frozen under the Ministery of the Scribes and Pharisees, they were heated under the Ministery of *John*.

In the handling of this point two Questions must be answered.

Quest. 1. Why the Gospel so successefull then?

1 Whence it came to passe that people were at that time so fervent and affectionate towards the Gospel, that the Gospel was so successefull then?

2 Whence it comes to passe that it is no more successefull now, or why that holy violence is now abated?

1 What are the reasons why it was so successefull in the dayes of *John* the Baptist? I answer, divers reasons may be rendered.

Reason 1.

1 Because of the novelty of the Gospel.

pel. [b] New things are most affecting and pleasing to mans nature. This was the ground of the peoples admiration at Christ, *Mark* 1. 27. *They were all amazed, saying, What new Doctrine is this? For with authority commandeth he the unclean spirits, and they obey him.* We are like to the Athenians, of whom it is written, *Act.* 17.21. *They spent their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing.* While *Johns* Ministery was new and fresh, all rejoyced in it, *John* 5.35. *Ye were willing for a season to rejoyce in his light.* And so the Ministery of *Paul* was most successefull among the Thessalonians in the beginning of it, 1 *Thess.* 2.1. *You know our entrance in unto you, that it was not in vain.* It was *Melanchthons* observation, that men were favourers and followers of the Gospel when it first came into a place.

[b] *Natura hominum novitatis avida.*

Mark 1. 27.

1 *Thes.* 2. 1.

τὴν εἴσοδον ἡμῶν. *Primum adventum nostrum. Principiis favebant, &c.*

Another ground of the successefulnesse of the Gospel at that time is this: Because the prophecies of the Old Testament were to be accomplished, both for the extension of the Church in regard of place and persons, and the intention of affection. 1 For the extension of the Church in regard of place and persons: That was fore-spoken of in Holy Writ, *Isa.* 54.1, 2, *sing, Oh barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud thou that didst not travell with childe: for more are the children of the desolate then the children of the married wife,*

Reason 2.

Isa. 54.1, 2.

saith

saith the Lord. Enlarge the place of thy tents, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations; spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes, &c. Which place is applied by *Paul* to the conversion of the Gentiles upon the first promulgation of the Gospel, *Gal.*4.27. where he cites the very words of the first verse now mentioned.

Another prophecy of the same nature you have, *Isa.*2.2. *It shall come to passe in the last dayes that the mountain of the Lords house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills, and all Nations shall flow unto it.* Which promise in the same words is repeated, *Micah* 4.1. Another promise of the same nature is *Isa.*60.3,4,5. and in many other places, which it is needlesse now to mention. *Isa.* 2.2. *Isa.*60.3, 4,5.

2 There were promises also for the intention of the affections, *Isa.*40.31. *They that wait upon the Lord shall renue their strength, they shall mount up with wings as eagles.* The eagle is a bird of the strongest and highest flight of any that flies in the air. So *Zach.*12.8. *In that day he that is feeble shall be as David, and the house of David shall be as God.* So 110 *Psal.*3. It is prophesied of the first bringing in of the Gospel, that *Thy people shall be a willing people in the day of thy power.* And this was to be when *God should send forth the rod of his power out of Sion,* as it is vers.2. You know what *Hushai* said of *David,* 2 *Sam.*17.18. *Isa.*40. 31. *Zach.*12. 8.

2 Sam. 17 8. *Samuel* 17. 8. He and his men were *mighty men, and chafed in their mindes as a Beare robbed of her whelps in the field.* And yet he that is feeble shall be as *David. Deodate* referres this promise to the beginning of the Gospel, and so *Cartwright.* That is the second reason.

Reason 3. 3 The Lord did this to put a greater glory upon the Gospel, and to raise the estimation of it in the hearts of men: for had the Gospel had but a few converts, and had it had but a little successe at the first promulgation of it, the people would not so much have taken notice of it, neither would they so much have admired it, nor so highly esteemed of it, as they did.

Reason 4. 4 This comes to passe because of the perspicuity of the doctrine of the Gospel above that of the law. The Gospel came now to be preached to the peoples capacity more then it was in the time of the law. Though it is true, that pure Gospel for the substance of it was preached in the time of the Law, yet not so plainly as in the time of the Gospel. For the law is nothing else but a dark Gospel, and the Gospel nothing else but a clear law. The law was hid and vailed under dark shadowes and ceremonies: But the Gospel was clear and evident. This you have fully set forth 2 Cor. 3. 15. *When Moses was read, there was a vaile upon their hearts, v. 15.* and when *they turn to the Lord,*

2 Cor. 3. 15, 16. *the*

the vail shall be taken away. And *vers.* 18. *But we all with open face beholding as in a glasse the glory of the Lord, &c.* This is also foretold, *Isa.* 30. 26. at the promulgation of the Gospel, *The light of the Moon shall be as the light of the Sun, and the light of the Sun shall be sevenfold as the light of seven dayes, &c.*

18. *Isa.* 30. 26.

5 Because of that great and glorious liberty which the Gospel instated them in above the law, I do not mean sensuall, but a Christian and holy, a Gospel-liberty. Thus Baptisme was appointed in the room of Circumcision. Our Saviour made this proffer, *Come unto me, all you that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest, Matth.* 11. 28. Which place is not onely to be understood of labouring under the burden of sin, but also under the bondage and yoke of the Ceremoniall law, under all those costly, painfull and toilsome rites imposed upon them: which were a *yoke that neither they nor their fathers were able to bear, as Peter* speaks of Circumcision, *Acts* 15. 10. And so you have the reasons for the Gospels successe in the dayes of *John*. And thus much for the first question.

Reason 5.

Mat. 11. 28.

Acts 15. 10.

The second question is this. How comes it to passe that the Ministery of the Word is not so successefull now as it was in the dayes of the first preaching of it? I answer, many reasons may be given. Some from the Minister, some from the people.

Quest. 2. Why the Gospel not so successefull now as formerly?

Reasons.

1 In

1 *In regard of Minister Reason* 1.

1. In regard of the Minister, and they are five.

Because Ministers are not so powerfull in preaching, and exemplary in life as *John* was, *Joh.* 5.35. *He was a burning and a shining light.* There was his zeal in preaching, there was the holinesse of his conversation. *Luke* 1.16. *And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God, and he shall go before them in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdome of the just, &c.* *Nazianzen* said of *Basil*, that he thundred in his doctrine, and lightened in his life.

Luke 1. 16.

Reason 2. *Mark* 1. 1,3.

Ministers preach not the Gospel so purely and perfectly as *John* did, *Mark* 1.1. *John* preached *the Gospel of Jesus Christ.* Verse 3. He preached repentance and remission of sins. Although *John* did bring in the Gospel, yet withall he preached up duties, and not cried down duties; he pressed on duties, and did not cast them off, he did earnestly presse on the duties of the morall law, he preached repentance, whereas many Ministers now a dayes account this but a legall and servile work not fit for Christians under the Gospel to be employed about, not fit for Ministers to preach, or people to hear. And this is one great reason why men take up such sinfull liberty to follow their own wayes and lusts, and by which meanes the Gos-

Gospel comes to be the lesse successefull. But this you see was far from *Iohns* minde and temper; for, said he, *Repent, for the Kingdome of heaven is at hand, Matth.3.2. Oh generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?* was our Saviours language, *Matth.23.33. Jerem.23.22. But if they had stood in my counsell, and had caused my people to hear my words, then they should have turned them from their evill way, and from the evill of their doings:* and 32. *Behold, I am against them that prophesie false dreams, saith the Lord, and do tell them, and cause my people to erre by their lies, and by their lightnesse; yet I sent them not, nor commanded them, therefore they shall not profit this people at all, saith the Lord.* 2 *Cor.4.2. But we have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftinesse, nor handling the Word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth commending our selves to every mans conscience in the sight of God.* It doth enervate and emasculate the power of the Word to have it mixed with falshoods. Much truth is preached in the Church of Rome, yet conversion is not ordinarily amongst them, because they adulterate the truth by many errours.

Jerem.23 22.

32.

2 Cor.4.2

The Scribes did little good by their preaching, because they did mingle so many ungrounded traditions which they taught without any authority, *Matth.7.29. Christ taught*

Matth. 7 29. taught as one having authority, and not as the Scribes.

Reason 3. 3 Because Ministers preach not so plainly as *John* did, either in matter, method, or manner of expression. 1 Cor. 14. part of the 5 verse, *Greater is he that prophesieth then he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the Church may receive edifying.* Many Preachers are like *Heraclitus*, who was called the dark Doctour, they affect sublime notions, obscure expressions, uncouth phrases, not making difficult truths plain, but plain truths difficult. 2 Cor. 14 5. *They darken counsell by words without knowledge*, Iob 38. 2.

Reason 4. Iob 38. 2. Mat. 3. 2. 4 Because Ministers preach not so methodically as *John* did. *Matth.* 3. 2. *John* preached, saying, *Repent, for the Kingdome of heaven is at hand*; *Mark* saith, the Gospel begun with *Iohns* Ministery, *Mark* 1. 1. and his doctrine began with repentance. Men take up other methods now adayes, and so prove unsuccesse full.

Reason 5. 5 Because there is not that harmony among Ministers now that was formerly. *John* preached what the Prophets taught, and Christ trod in *Iohns* steps, and the Apostles exactly agreed with and continued in the doctrine of their predecessours. But now in our time Ministers are divided; one preacheth one thing, another preacheth another thing; and this doth very much trouble the mindes of people, and makes many

many stumble at the word, and so the Gospel proves unsuccessefull.

2 This comes to passe from the people, and that for four reasons.

2 *In regard of the people.*

1 People do more question the office, and calling of the Ministery now then they did question *Iohns*. *Matth.* 21.26. —*All men held Iohn as a Prophet.* The reason why *Pauls* Ministery was ineffectuall to many Corinthians was this; because they questioned his calling, and therefore he labours to vindicate his Apostolicall authority all along the Epistle. This doth take off that awe and majesty that should be in men to the Word. As on the contrary, the reason why the Ministery of *Paul* was so effectuall to the Thessalonians, was this: *Because when they received the Word of God, they received it not as the word of men, but (as it is in truth) as the Word of God, which effectually worketh in them that believe*, 1 *Thess.* 2.13. *Reason* 1. *Mat.* 21. 26. 1 *Thes.* 2. 13.

I know that some question the lawfulnesse of our Ministery upon this ground, because miracles do not attend our preaching, as they did at the first promulgation of the Gospel. But this is no just reason, and (that I may remove this obstacle off the successe of the Gospel) I shall by the way briefly disprove it.

Mat. 21. 25, 26. *John* 10. 41.

1 *Iohn* had his calling from heaven, *Mat.* 21.25,26. and yet *Iohn did no miracle*, *John* 10.41.

2 Mi-

Miracula non sunt multiplicanda sine necessitate

2 Miracles are not necessary now as they were at the first planting of the Gospel. There was more need of miracles then that the people might give attendance to the Ministery in those days. *The Iews require a signe,* 1 *Cor.*1.22. 1 *Cor.*14.22. *Tongues are for a signe not to them that believe, but to them that believe not, but prophesying serveth not for them that believe not, but for them which believe.*

1 *Cor.*1. 22. 1 *Cor.*14 22.

3 Miracles were signes of the Apostleship but not of the Ministery, 2 *Cor.*12.12. *The signes of an Apostle were wrought among you, in signes, and wonders, and mighty deeds. Timothy* and *Titus* could work no miracles, yet no man doubts of their authority. So that want of miracles doth not at all invalidate the authority of the Ministery. So I have removed the first impediment of the successe of the Gospel in our dayes.

2 *Cor.*12 12.

That is the first reason.

Reason 2.

The long continuance of the Word makes it unsuccessefull, (such is the corruption of mens hearts.) The nature of man is for new things, and in tract of time the love of men to the Word is eaten out, whereas at the first people flocked to the Gospel, as Doves to the windowes, yet afterward they grew careless and negligent in Gods Ordinances. Manna at first was loved, but afterwards it cloyed the Israelites, and they loathed it. Many men are

Christ

Christ and Gospel ghatred.

Another reason is, because Discipline is not joyned with Doctrine. The Church is the garden of God, the Doctrine is the flowers of this garden, Discipline is the hedge. Neither Christ nor *John* the Baptist by their coming would destroy the government of the Church among the Jews, and when that was taken down Christ set up another in its stead. Now look, as it is in a State, the intervals of government breed many State-heresies, if I may so call them, mutinies, factions, and parties among the people, intercepting the peace of the land. So it is in the Church, when the reines of government are let loose, in come errours and disorders; and the good seed is choaked by that meanes. *Reason 3.*

4. This comes to passe from the disuse of family-duties. The reason why the reformation succeeded so well in *Germany* was because the peoples catechizing went along with *Luthers* preaching. It was laid as a charge upon masters of families, that they should catechize their children, *Dent.* 6. 6,7. *And these words which I command thee this day shall be in thine heart, and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and thou shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, &c.* *Reason 4.* *Dent.* 6. 6,7.

People do not back the Ministers preaching of the Word with this duty of prayer, that

that God would ſanctifie the word preached to their ſouls, and make it ſucceſſefull. It is an obſervable paſſage which you finde, *Mark 4. 24. Take heed what you hear; for with what meaſure you meet, it ſhall be meaſured to you, and unto you that hear ſhall more be given.* Sometimes this expreſſion is referred to raſh judgement, as *Matth. 7. 2.* ſometimes to works of mercy, but here it is uſed as an argument to ſtir up people to prepare their hearts for the hearing of the Word with care and conſcience. For if it be your care to fit your ſelves for the Word, and to ſettle it in your hearts, and practiſe it in your lives, God will then meaſure the ſame back unto you by his bleſſing of the Word, to the ſalvation and edification of your ſouls: whereas the neglect of this duty is a great cauſe why the word is not ſo ſucceſſfull now as it was formerly.

Matth.

MATTHEW. 11. 12.

And from the dayes of John the Baptist until now, the Kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.

Sermons Preacht at Lawrence Jury, April 22, 1649.
SERMON II.

THe doctrinall part being finished, I now come to application. And this doctrine may be usefull in five respects. 1 For reproof. 2 For comfort. 3 For instruction. 4 For caution. 5 To stirre up our lamentation.

Use 1. 1 This will reprove severall sorts of persons. Out of this Quiver I may draw ten arrowes of reproof, that may pierce into the hearts of ten severall sorts of men.

Reproof 1. 1 It reproves those who are violent in the wayes of sin, that put forth themselves

to the utmost, and draw out their strength in wayes of wickednesse: that like those in *Jerem.8.6.* *Jer.8.6.* *that turn to their course, as the horse rusheth into the battel*; as an horse that is so fierce in the war that he rusheth into it without fear of danger: So the Spirit of God setteth forth the wickednesse of mens hearts; by nature they rush into sin, not considering what they do, as the horse. See what *Job* saith concerning the horse, *Job* 39. 19. *Hast thou given the horse strength? hast thou cloathed his neck with thunder?* 20. *Canst thou make him afraid as a grasse-hopper, the glory of his nostrils is terrible.* 21. *He paweth in the valley, and rejoyceth in his strength, he goeth on to meet the armed men.* 22. *He mocketh at fear, and is not affrighted, neither turneth he back from the sword.* Verse 25. *He saith among the trumpets, Aha, Aha, and he smelleth the battel afar off, the thunder of the captains and shooting.* Even in this manner do wicked men rush into wickednesse; no fear, nor wit can restrain them; no dangers, nor threatnings either from God or man can keep them in. *Jer.2.23* *Jeremy* 2. 23. *They are as a swift Dromedarie, traversing her wayes. Their course is evill, and their force is not right.* Jeremy 23. 10. *Their hearts are fully set in them to do evill*, Eccles.8.11. *They weary themselves to commit iniquity*, Jeremy 9.5. *The people labour in the fire, and weary themselves for very vanity*, Habak.2.13. *They sleep not except* *Eccles.8. 11.* *Hab.2. 13.*

they

they have done mischief, and their sleep is taken away except they cause some to fall, Prov. 4. 16. Prov. 4. 16.

2. This reproves those that instead of an holy violence are guilty of tumultuous violence, that by force and power disturbe humane societies, destroying laws and government, that do as *Antiochus* did, *Dan.* 7. 25. *He spoke great words against the most high, and wore out the Saints of the most high, and thought to change times and laws.* Dan. 7. 25.

3. This reproves those that instead of an holy violence, are guilty of oppressing violence, which is the sin chiefly of rich men *Mic.* 6. 12. *For the rich men thereof are full violence. It is they that grinde the faces of the poor.* Mic. 2. 2. *They covet fields, and take them by violence, & houses, & take them away, and so they oppresse a man and his house.* Amos 3. 10. *They know not to do right, who store up violence and robbery in their palaces.* Prov. 4. 17. *They eat the bread of wickedness, & drink the wine of violence.* Micah 6 12. Micah 2 2. Amos 3. 10. Prov. 4. 17.

4. This reproves those who are eager & violent in their pursuits after the things of this life, but not so after spiritual things; we are all upon the spur, all upon the wing after the world, here is violence upon violence, labour upon labour for these things which we may have, and yet be never the better, and want them, and yet be never the worse. Covetous men are said to *pant after the dust of the earth*, *Amos* 2. 7. So eager are they in their pursuit after the world, as if they were Amos 2. 7.

Psal. 59. 6, 14.

almost out of breath. *Psal.* 59. 6, 14. *They return at evening, they make a noise like a dog, and go about the city.* No creature is so sensible of hunger as a dog. Covetous men are like dogs towards the world, as if they were made up all of desires, but towards the things of eternity we are as if we were all Stoicks, and had no passions in us. As hot as fire for earth, and as cold as any ice for heaven. Oh how many pant after the earth who have no breathing after heaven!

Fervent issimi in terrenis, frigidissimi in cœlestibus.

5 This reproves those who are violent oppossers of the Gospel. As the former may be called a worldly violence, so this may be called a persecuting violence. Such was the violence of *Paul* before his conversion, *Act.* 26. 11. *I punished them oft in every Synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme, and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange Cities.* The Scribes and Pharisees are said to be *filled with madnesse*, against Christ after the miracle was wrought in curing the man with the withered hand, *Luke* 6. 11. There are some that understand my Text of this persecuting violence. This is called *a rage reaching up to heaven*, 2 *Chron.* 28. 9.

Acts 26. 11.

Luke 6. 11.

2 *Chron.* 28. 9.

6 This reproves such, who account an holy zeal and violence in the wayes of religion to be onely a furious frensie. Such were they, *Act.* 2. 13. that said, *These men are filled with new wine*, when the Apostles

Acts 2. 13.

were

were zealous in the preaching of the Gospel. Such were the friends of Christ, when he was zealous and fervent in the doing of his Fathers will, and so intent upon it that he had no leasure to eat his meat, *They went to lay hold of him, for they said, He is beside himself*, Mark 3. 21. The like censure did *Festus* passe on *Paul*, when he was zealous to win men to the Gospel, he said, *Thou art beside thy selfe, much learning doth make thee mad*, Act. 26. 24. *Basil*, when he was passionately eager against the Arian heresie, it was interpreted a symptome of his dotage. If men will not be baffled out of their religion, reformation, &c. they are esteemed but furious zealots, men of violent spirits. Thus it fared with zealous *Paul*, 2 Cor. 5. 13. *Whether we are beside our selves, it is to God, or whether we be sober, it is for your cause.* This reproves those who were once violent and zealous in religion, but now their zeal is abated. We have a proverb: Nothing that is violent is durable; if the violent motion proceeds from some externall artificiall cause, and not from a rooted stirring principle within. Many that go in the wayes of God meerly from an externall principle, it may be credit or profit, though they may be seemingly violent for a time, yet their violence will not last, they will not be stedfast in the wayes of religion

Mark 3. 21.

Acts, 26. 24.

2 *Cor.* 5. 13.

Nullum violentum est perpetuum.

and in a Christian course. Some who have flourished in the Spring have had a withering time, their fruit decayed as the leaves fall off in Autumn. It may be said of many in regard of their souls, as it was said of *David* in regard of his body: *When he was old and stricken in years, they covered him with cloaths, and he gat no heat*, 1 *King.* 1.1. Many, though they are plied with ordinances, can get no heat in them: *Augustine* observes it of many in his dayes, that would at their first conversion pray frequently & live holily, but after a while they would grow more remisse, and pray more coldly and slightly then they did before. There are few of whom after a long profession of religion it can be said, as was said of *Moses*, *Deut.* 34.7. *His eye was not dim, nor his naturall force abated.* Many are like *Asa*, their end is worse then their beginning.

1 *Kings* 1.1.

Deut. 34.7.

8 This reproves those that content themselves with moderation in the matters of religion, that account a dram of zeal enough for a talent of discretion, as Mr. *Greenham* said. Many men are of this opinion, that religion is dangerous, and that an holy violence in religion is attended with troubles and dangers, and therefore it is best to be moderate in religion. There are many of these men in our dayes, otherwise religion had never come to so low an ebbe as now it is. It was the saying of one, that

that men may be religious, but then they must not be too zealous: they must not be too violent for the wayes of God, for then they are called men of hot & furious ſpirits; Men (it ſeemes) muſt not love religion too much. *Amama* quotes *Tarnovius*, who mentions a ſort of men that brought in an opinion, which he cals a new Goſpel, that if a man perform the externall duties of religion, if he go to the Church, hear the word, pray, &c. it was ſufficient for ſalvation. Of this temper *Gallio* was, *Act.* 18. 17. *Gallio cared for none of thoſe things.* A little religion will ſerve the turn. Moſt of the Statiſts and Politicians of this world are of this temper, which God will one day recount a Laodicean lukewarmneſſe or timerous cowardize. Geographers, who write of the ſituation of *England*, ſay, that it is between the Torrid and the Frigid Zone, neither hot nor cold, I wiſh our hearts were not like our land.

Acts 18. 17.

9. This reproves thoſe that expreſſe more violence outwardly then they have inwardly. There are many men that will hear Sermons on Lords dayes, & Lectures on week-dayes, ſpeak well of religion, and of the wayes and people of God, but if you look to them in their families, and in their cloſets, you ſhall finde them of another temper. Theſe men are like pepper, hot in the mouth, but

cold in the ſtomack. I may reſemble ſuch to a pot boiling over the fire, hot at the top, cold at the bottome. So ſome men are boiling hot in the mouth, but their hearts are cold and frozen. As it is with men ſick of a feaver, the face and hands and other externall parts of the body burn, when the heart ſhakes and quivers with cold.

10 This reproves thoſe who all their life remain dull and ſluggiſh in religion, that like Carriers horſes keep their ordinary pace, they will not go beyond their bating place, they are like Dromedaries, ſwift in the wayes of ſin, but like the dull Aſſe, ſlow in the wayes of God. The firſtling of other beaſts was to be offered to God, but not the firſtling of an aſſe, *Exod.* 13. 13. *And every firſtling of an aſſe thou ſhalt redeem with a lamb, and if thou wilt not redeem it thou ſhalt break its neck*; to note that of ſluggiſh and dull hearts, the very beſt ſervices are not acceptable to God. The ſnail is reckoned among the unclean creatures, *Levit.* 11. 30. Thoſe hearts that are of this dull conſtitution are impure and odious in the ſight of God. And thus much ſhall ſerve by way of reproof.

Exod. 13. 13.

Levit. 11 30.

Uſe 2. For Comfort. 1 To Miniſters for

2 This doctrine is uſefull for comfort, and that 1. To Miniſters. 2. To hearers.

1 To Miniſters; and that for 3 reaſons.

1 Though here is matter of trouble, yet

yet no fear of guilt, if thou discharge thy duty faithfully, though not successfully. *Ezek.* 3. 19. *If thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity, but thou hast delivered thy soul.* *Act.* 20.26. when *Paul* had used his utmost endeavours at *Ephesus*, he vindicates himself thus; *I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men.* *Act.* 18.6. when *Paul* preached to the Jews, and they would not obey the Gospel, *He shook his raiment, & said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads, I am clean: from henceforth I will go to the Gentiles.* Though a Minister doth all his dayes plow the rocks, and sowe the sands, and spend his strength in vain, yet this will bring no guilt upon a Ministers conscience: for though it be the Ministers duty to preach the Word, yet it is Gods work to convert the soul.

three Reasons.

Ezek. 3. 19.

Acts 20. 26.

Acts 18. 6.

2 God rewards Ministers according to their labour, not successe, 2 *Cor.* 2.15. *For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ in them that are saved, and in them that perish.*

2 *Cor.* 2. 15.

The father payes the nurse, though the childe die. The Apothecaries bill must be paid, though the patient die: So God will reward Ministers, though successe be not answerable to their endeavours, *Isa.* 49.4. *Then I said, I have laboured in vain, and spent my strength for nought and in vain, yet sure-*

Isa. 49. 2.

surely my judgement is with the Lord, and my work with my God; or the reward of my work.

John 4. 36,37.

3 The word may live in the hearers hearts when the Minister is dead, *John* 4. 36,37. *He that reapeth, receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternall, that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoyce together.* And herein is that saying true, *One soweth, and another reapeth.* As a wicked man doth hurt after his death, so a good man doth good, 2 *King.* 23.15. *Jeroboams* wickednesse proved a snare to *Israel* in the dayes of *Josiah*, which was 360 years after his death. And *Davids* example did good on *Josiah* 400 years after, 2 *King.* 22.2. *Josiah did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, and walked in all the wayes of David his father.*

2 *Kings* 23.15.

2 *Kings* 22.2.

Comfort to hearers for three reasons.

2 As here is comfort for Ministers, so also here is comfort to hearers, and that for 3 reasons.

Luke 8.8

Mat. 13. 23.

1 God never expected all should attein the same measure of grace. Although, *Luk.* 8.8. the seed that fell in good ground is said to bear an hundred fold, yet, *Matth.* 13. 23. the grounds differed, *and some brought forth but sixty, some but thirty.* Christ hath lambs in his fold as well as sheep, Babes in his house as well as strong men.

2 It may be what is wanting in a sudden and short violence, is made up in solidity.

Oakes

Oakes grow not so fast as the Willow-trees, but they grow more solidly.

3 God will cherish the smallest beginnings of good in the hearts of his people, *Cant.* 7. 12. *Let us goup early to the vineyards, let us seeif the vine flourish, whether the tender grape appear, the pomegranates bud forth, there will I give thee my loves.* The Lord Jesus took notice not onely of the strong and grown grapes, but also of the tender grapes, not onely of the fruit, but of the buddings. The very buddings of grace are accepted. And how should this comfort weak Christians, and incourage them to increase with the increase of God, and to get more of this holy violence in heavenly things. *Matth.* 12. 20. *A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoaking flax he will not quench, till he send forth judgement into victory.* He speaks there of new converts holy desires, and gracious resolutions in a poor soul, though they do but smoak, and not burn, yet Jesus Christ will not quench them till he have brought forth judgement to victory, by which he meanes, till they come to be perfect men and women in Christ Jesus.

Cant. 7. 12.

Matth.

MATTHEW 11. 12.

And from the dayes of John the Baptist until now, the Kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.

Sermons Preacht at Lawrence Jury, April 29, 1629. SERMON III.

IN the third place, this doctrine may serve for instruction touching severall things. 1 The nature of this holy violence. 2 The necessity of it. 3 The discovery of it. 4 The differences betwixt an heady and holy violence.

Use 3. Instruction

1 What is the nature of this violence.

Quest. 1. If you ask, what is the nature of this holy violence?

I answer, 1 It is a full and vehement bent of a mans desires, affections, and endeavours after Jesus Christ in the Gospel; so

so that no difficulties or discouragements whatsoever shall take him off from his pursuit after Christ in the way of his ordinances.

2 The necessity of it.

2 For the necessity of it, that appears in 5 regards. 1 In regard of God. 2 In regard of our selves. 3 In respect of the devil. 4 In respect of other men. 5 In respect of heaven it self.

1 In regard of God, *Eccles.9.10. Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might.* God requires this at your hands, *Rom.12.11. Not slothfull in businesse, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.* The word signifies boiling in spirit.

1 In regard of God. *Rom.12.11.* τῷ πνεύματι ζέοντες *boyling in spirit.*

2 In respect of our selves, and that for two reasons.

2 In respect of our selves.

1 We have violent temptations against us, our affections must be equal to our temptations; if our affections be not violent, how can we resist violent temptations? shall not we be as violent to save our souls as the Devil is to damne them? Satan invades the soul with fierce and furious assaults.

2 We have been violent in the wayes of sin. Shew as much violence in the wayes of God, as you can, and when you have done all, it will come short of your former violence in the wayes of sin, *Rom 6.19. As ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanesse, and to iniquity unto iniquity: even* *Rom.6.19*

so

so now yield your members servants to righteousnesse unto holinesse. There are three *To's* in the expression of the service of sin, to uncleannesse, to iniquity, and unto iniquity, but in the service of God there are onely two *To's*, to righteousnesse, and unto holines. To note that we were more addicted to sin formerly then now we are to grace; the reason is, then there was nothing but sin in the soul, now there is something else besides grace, a stream of corruption to oppose it. We ought to be as violent in good as in evil: the same word which signifies to persecute, *Act.* 26.11. is used to set out his earnest pressing towards heaven, *Phil.* 3.14.

Acts 26. 11.

διώκω *Phil.* 3. 14.

In respect of the Devill.

3 In regard of the devill. He hath violent temptations and suggestions, 1 *Pet.* 5.8. *Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the Devil as a roaring lion walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.* 1 He is said to be an adversary. Now an adversary will watch all opportunities for your hurt, and will be intently set upon it. 2 He is a lion, not a lamb; a lion, a savage, fierce, and furious creature. 3 He is not asleep, but a roaring lion. 4 Not a lion standing still, contented with the prey when he hath gotten it, but still going about for more: he is not contented with what he hath gotten, though he hath been going about ever since *Adams* fal, yet he goes about still for more, he

1 *Pet.* 5.8

he labours to fill hell with souls. 5. He seeks whom he may devour. The devill watcheth, and doest thou sleep?

Vigilat diabolus, & tu dormis.

4 In regard of other men, and those either bad or good.

In respect of other men bad

1. In regard of bad men.

men.

1. Consider, they are violent against the truth, and wilt not thou be as eager and violent in the profession of the Gospel, as they are in their oppositions against it? As *Zeno* said to one of his acquaintance, who was enticed to bear false witnesse against another, and walked privately, because he would avoid the man that sought to suborn him. Oh, said *Zeno*, Shall he not be ashamed of sin, and wilt thou be ashamed to set thy selfe against sin?

2. Bad men rage and are violent in wayes of wickednesse: Wicked men are as swift as dromedaries in the wayes of sin, and wilt thou be as a dull asse in the service of God? shall a man run fast in a way of sin to destroy his soul, and will you but creep in the wayes of God to save your soul? shall wicked men run post to hell, and wilt thou but creep slowly to heaven? shall a man make speed to the place of execution, and wilt thou but move slowly towards a crown and throne? shall wicked men not be ashamed to shew their rage in a sinfull course, and shall godly men be ashamed to be zealous in the wayes of God? *Jer.* 8, 6.

Jer. 8, 6.

They

שטף *irrait more inundantis aquæ.*

They turn to their course as the horse rusheth into the battel, *Jer.* 9. 5. They weary themselves to commit iniquity, will not you do as much for God as they do for Satan?

1 In regard of good men, *Num.* 14. 24. מילא אחרי *Implevit ire post me,* He went after me with full sail. *Psal.* 132 4,5. *Psal.* 69. 9. *Luke* 13. 24.

2. In regard of good men. How eager and earnest are they after God? *Caleb* and *Joshua* followed God fully, *Numb.* 14. 24. when hypocrites follow God partially and by halves. *Psal.* 132. 4, 5. *David* was so violent for God, that *he would give no sleep to his eyes, nor slumber to his eye-lids, untill he found out a place for the Lord, an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob.* As on the contrary, those wicked men, *Prov.* 4. 16. were so violent in wickedness, that *they could not sleep, except they caused some to fall. Psal.* 69. 9. *The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up, and the reproaches of them that reproached thee fell upon me.*

3 In respect of heaven it self, *Luke* 13. 24. *Strive to enter in at the strait gate; for many I say unto you will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.* Strive to an agony, or as in an agony men strive for life: it is not enough to seek; many seekers shall never finde, but there must be striving: there must be a kinde of holy impatiency to get into heaven, 1 *Cor.* 9. 24, 25. *Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things.*

3 In regard of Heaven it self. ἀγωνίζεσθε *more pugilum certate.* 1 *Cor.* 9. 24, 25.

things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible. 2 *Tim.* 2. 5. *And if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned except he strive lawfully.* Heaven is compared to a hill, and hell to a pit. It will cost a man sweat and labour to get up an hill, but it is an easie thing to go down into a pit. Heaven is as Canaan (the type of it) was, though a land of promise, yet of conquest too. There were many Giants there, the sons of *Anak* in the land. Heaven is not had without eagerness, *Luk.* 16. 16. *Every man presseth into it.* It is an allusion to souldiers that storm a City or strong Garrison, with all the speed and violence they can. Should souldiers go about that great work in a marching pace, they might all be cut off. And thus much shall suffice for the second thing, to shew the necessity of this holy violence.

2 *Tim.* 2. 5.

Facilis descensus Averni. Virgil.

βιάζεται. Paræus.

The 3 thing is the discovery of this holy violence. Now it is discovered by these following marks. A violent or zealous person is one,

3 The discovery of this violence.

1 Who is patient in his own cause, but impatient in Gods cause. This was the temper of *David.* What the enemies did to *David* was but as a pin in the flesh, but what they did against God was as a sword in his bones. *Psal.* 42. 10. *As with a sword in my bones mine enemies reproached me, while they say daily unto me, Where is thy God?* The

reproaching of God vvas as death to him, as though he had been slain by it, *as slaying in my bones*. *Moses* vvas a man very meek in his ovvn vvrongs, *Numb.* 12. 3. *Moses was very meek, above all the men that were upon the face of the earth*; but in the cause of God, *Exod.* 32. he carried himselfe as if he had been a man made up all of passion, he broke the tables of stone. So Jesus Christ vvas famous for his gentlenesse, he vvas a lambe for meeknesse, and yet in the cause of his Father, he applied that to himselfe; *The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up*, *John* 2. 17.

בערצוחו בעצמותי *Num.* 12 3.

Exod. 32.

John 2. 17.

2. He never thinks that he began to serve God soon enough, or did him work enough, *Psal.* 63. 1. *Early will I seek thee*, and *v.* 8. *My soul followeth hard after God*. *Act.* 13. 22. God gave *David* this testimony, and said, I have found *David* the son of *Jesse*, a man after mine ovvn heart, vvhich shall fulfill all my vvill. *Psal.* 119. 6. *Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect to all thy commandments*.

Psal. 63. 1.

Acts 13. 22.

Psal. 119 6.

3. He is desirous to glorifie God by suffering as vvell as by doing, *to follow the Lamb whithersoever he goes*; to the vvildernesse, as vvell as to paradise; to a prison, as vvell as to a palace. *Jer.* 2. 2. *I remember the kindness of thy youth, — when thou wentest after me in a land that was not sowne*. *Cant.* 8. 5. *Who is this that cometh up from the wildernesse, leaning upon*

Jer. 2. 2.

Cant. 8. 5.

upon her beloved, from the wilderneſſe of afflictions. *Matth.* 8. 19. *A certain Scribe came to him, and ſaid, Maſter, I will follow thee whitherſoever thou goeſt.* He would follow Chriſt in doing, but not in ſuffering; as cloth doth laſt in wearing, but ſhrink in wetting; for when Chriſt told him, *The foxes have holes, the birds of the air neſts, but the ſon of man hath not where to lay his head*, verſe 20. his courage was abated. *Matth.* 8 19.

4 He lookes more after duty then reward, and complains more of his defects in it, then for want of expected returnes to it. Many men are content to follow God, ſo long as there is any advantage in ſo doing; they wil do their duty, but they do not care for duty, but upon expectation of reward. Remiſs ſpirits follow God as a dog doth his maſter, till he comes by a carrion, then he leaves his maſter, and turns aſide to it: So wicked men follow God till they come at a carrion, till they meet with ſome ſtinking luſt, ſome occaſion or object of ſin, but then they depart from God, and cloſe with it. But on the contrary *David* followed after God, and thirſted for God even then when he was *in a drie and thirſty land, where no water was*, *Pſal.* 63. 1. Had we been in *Davids caſe*, we ſhould have ſaid, O Lord, give me drink; had we been in a barren land, we ſhould have ſaid, O Lord, give me food: but *David* in a barren and thirſty land cries, *Pſal.* 63. 1.

O Lord, give me thy self. That is the spirit of a man that is truly zealous after the Gospel.

5 Difficulties and opposition do rather quicken then abase his endevours; what adventures will he not make? what paines will he not take? what hazards will he not run for God? And as it is with the fire in the Smiths forge, that growes hotter and more violent when the water is sprinkled upon it, or as fire burnes the most vehemently in a cold and frosty day: So that opposition that is made against a zealous man doth but make it the more eager and fervent by a holy *Antiperistasis*. Thus it was in the dayes of Christ, the harder it was to get to him, the more violent and restlesse were they till they came to him. *They trod one upon another, being an innumerable multitude of people,* Luke 12. 1. Some forced their passage to Christ (as we say hunger doth to meat) through stone walls, *Mark* 2. 4. *And when they could not come nigh unto Christ for the presse, they uncovered the roof where he was, and when they had broken it up they let down the bed, &c.* Such was the temper of that Syrophenician, whose zeal vvas not quenched but increased by opposition, though even Christ did set himselfe against her as an adversary; When Christ said, *It is not meet to take the childrens bread and give it to dogs,* *Mark* 7. 27. Here is cold vvater (one vvould think)

Luke 12. 1.

Mark 2. 4.

Mark 7. 27.

think) enough to quench the zeal of many a professour, but the fire of her zeal made fuel of this cooling expression; *She answered, Yet the dogs under the table, eat of the childrens crumbs, verse* 28. One compares a violent Christian to a burre, the more paines you take to get it off, it sticks the faster on: So a zealous Christian, the more you endevour to pull him from God, he cleaves the closer to him. This was *Davids* disposition, when he danced before the Lord, when *Michal* despised him, and reproved him, and fell foul upon him for it; he answers, *I will yet be more vile then thus, & will be base in mine own sight, for it was before the Lord*, 2 *Sam* 6. 21, 22. And thus much for the third particular, the discovery of this holy violence. I now come to the fourth.

Verse 28.

2 *Sam.* 6. 21, 22.

The fourth particular is the difference betwixt an heady and rash, and an holy and religious violence. Now I shall shew that in 10 particulars.

4 The difference between a rash and a holy violence.

1 It is most seen in triviall and circumstantiall matters. Such was the violence of the Pharisees, about washing their vessels and their hands before meat, but they never lookt after the washing of the heart. So the Prelaticall party shewed much heat and violence about ceremonies, whereas they were lukewarm, yea cold in more substantiall matters, the observation of the Sabbath, and the strict exercise of holinesse,

&c. They were very violent for the linnen Ephod, though it may be there was a leprous skin under it; they took great care to have rails about the Communion-table, but never took care to make a rail to keep prophane persons from the prophanation of the Sacrament; but now a godly man is most conversant about that which may be most advantagious to him, which will bring him neerest heaven, which will be of most use to him to glorifie God, and to save his soul.

2 It is kindled by passion and vain glory in the one, by a zeal and holy indignation in the other. Thus many men are zealous in the broaching of errours; when they cannot get glory by holding the truth, then they will give up themselves to vent errours. Whereas true violence comes from a better principle, and aimes at an higher end. The fire of the Altar was to come from heaven, *Levit.* 9. 24. And when *Nadab* and *Abihu* offered sacrifice with strange fire, it was not accepted, nay they were slain in their enterprize. Our zeal should be a fire from heaven. God accounts that strange fire we fetch from our own hearts.

Levit. 9. 24.

3 Violent rash zeal makes a man go beyond the bounds of his place and calling. *Samuel* reprov'd *Saul* for his heady violence, 1 *Sam.* 13. 13. When *Saul* had taken upon him to offer sacrifice, *Samuel* said, *Thou*

1 *Sam.* 13 13.

hast

hast done foolishly. Yet *Saul* pleaded a fair excuse, *verse* 11, 12. *Saul* said, *Because I saw that the people were scattered from me, and that thou camest not within the dayes appointed, and that the Philistines gathered themselves together to Michmash, therefore said I, The Philistines will come down now upon me to Gilgal, and I have not made supplication unto the Lord. I forced my selfe therefore, and offered a burnt-offering.* V. 11, 12.

You see *Saul* had much to say, yet all would not serve to justifie his invasion into the Priests office. Such was the violence of *Peter*, *Matth.* 26. 51. *He stretched out his hand, and drew his sword, and struck a servant of the High Priest, and smote off his ear.* But an holy violence makes a man zealous in his place. A zealous Magistrate will severely punish sin, let other Justices indulge it. A zealous Minister will be faithfull and fervent in the reproving of sin, though others prove dumb dogs, or flatterers that sowe pillowes under mens elbowes. So a zealous master of a family resolves with good *Joshua*, *That he and his house will serve the Lord*, *Josh.* 24. 15. whatever other masters and other families do. Fire in its place is good and usefull, but out of its place how hurtfull and destructive? Mat. 26. 51. Josh. 24. 15.

Sermons Preacht at Lawrence Jury, April 29, 1619 SERMON IIII.

MATTHEW 11. 12.

And from the dayes of John *the Baptist untill now, the Kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.*

AN heady violence is more eager at first then at the latter end. This difference the Philosopher puts between naturall and violent motions, that naturall motions are slow at the beginning, but swifter when they come neerest their journeys end; as a falling stone moves very slow when it first begins to fall, but faster when it comes neerer its center. On the contrary, violent motions are swifter in the beginning, slower in the conclusion. As an arrow shot out of

of a bow moves exceeding swiftly at the first, but afterwards flags and growes remisse, insomuch at last the motion of it ceases. So a holy violence is like the violent motion of a bow at first, slow afterward: But contrarily an holy violence is like a naturall motion, that acts with more vigour in the end then in the beginning. This was the commendation of the Church of *Thyatira*, *That her last workes were more then her first*, *Revel.* 2. 19.

5 Heady violence will be discouraged in religion by small difficulties. Such was the violence of that man forementioned, that was earnest to come to Christ, but when Christ told him, *The foxes have holes, and the birds of the aire have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head*, *Matth.* 8. 20. his zeal was abated. But an holy violence is quickened, not abated by opposition, *Job* 32. 19. *Behold, my belly is as wine which hath no vent, it is ready to burst like new bottles.* *Matth.* 29 *Job* 32. 19.

6 An heady violence is led more by example then rule; like that violence of the people of *Ephesus* for *Diana*, *Act.* 19. 32. Some cried one thing, and some another, and the most part knew not wherefore they were come together. Such was the violence of the Scribes and Pharisees, *John* 7. 47, 48, 49. *Then answered him the Pharisees: Are you also deceived? Have any of the rulers or of* *Acts* 19. 32.

the Pharisees believed on him? But this people who know not the law, are cursed. But an holy violence is led by Scripture-rule, not by popular example. The word was the rule that guided *Joshua* to that resolution, *That he and his house would serve the Lord.*

7 One that hath this heady violence is most busied with controversials and circumstantials in religion. Thus *Saul* was violent against the eating of the blood of the sacrifices, yet made no conscience of shedding the blood of fourscore and five of the Priests of the Lord: But an holy violence makes a man conversant in the practicals of Christianity, *Tit.* 2. 14. *The people of God are a people zealous of good workes.* There was lesse of the power of religion in those times wherein the Schoolmen most flourished, and the heat of mens spirits was spent in curious and frivolous speculations; while they that should have instructed the people turn'd disputants, the poor multitude became Atheists. It was an heady violence betwixt the Eastern and Western Churches touching the time of the observation of *Easter*, when many other truths of God that lay a bleeding were neglected, and they did not contend earnestly for many of the doctrines of faith that was once delivered to the Saints. So many men among us spend all their time about notions and disputes, and this hath proved a very canker to

Titus 2. 14.

to eat out the power of godlinesse. In the City of *Megara* there was a great contention between two men, which of them should stand in the shadow of an asse upon a Sun-shine day. Such was the violence of *Paul* before his conversion, *Gal.* 1.14. *He was exceedingly zealous for the traditions of his fathers.* Gal. 1.14

8 An heady violence is an uneven violence, there is no uniformity in it; it is a violence against some sins, not all; it is for some duties, not others; to act some graces, but not all. Such was the violence of *Jehu*. He was very hot and violent against the Priests and worship of *Baal*, 2 *Kings* 10. 28. *Jehu* destroyed *Baal* out of *Israel*: *But Jehu departed not from the sins of Jeroboam, which made Israel to sin, verse* 31. Such was the violence of *Saul* for sacrifice, but not for obedience. But now an holy violence is uniform, it carries a man out against every sin, for every duty, it makes a man to walk in all the commandements of God. 2 Kings 10.28. Verse 31,

9 This heady violence will make a man disturbe humane societies and civil government, anticipate authority: But an holy violence, though violent towards God, yet is quiet and peaceable towards men; though he pursue heaven with violence, yet he lives in the earth with meeknesse and quietnesse. 2 *Pet.* 2.10. Those ancient hereticks were such as did *despise government, presumptuous, selfe-* 2 Pet. 2. 10.

self-willed, and were not afraid to speak evil of dignities. But the wisdome that is from above, is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easie to be intreated, &c. Jam. 3. 17.

James 3. 17.

To Heady violence is accompanied with stoutnesse of heart both towards God and men, it proceeds from a naturall rashnesse: But holy violence is accompanied with humiliation, *Revel. 3. 19.* The Church of Laodicea is commanded to be zealous and repent. Their zeal for God must be joyned with the breaking of their own hearts. So the zeal of the Corinthians, *2 Cor. 7. 11.* was accompanied with a godly sorrow, with fear, with indignation against themselves, with revenge. And thus much shall suffice for the fourth particular, and last branch of the use of instruction; namely, the difference between heady and holy violence. And so much for the third use.

Revel. 3. 19.

2 Cor. 7. 11.

Use 4. For caution in 4 things.

The fourth use is for caution, and that in four particulars. 1. Take heed of pleading for, or being contented with a moderation in matters of religion. Moderation in religion is accounted a vertue in these times, whereas Jesus Christ would have spued us out of his mouth. If Jesus Christ commend an holy violence in the matters of religion, what becomes of this moderation? Indeed for men to be moderate in things that are lawfull is good. It is the advice of the Apostle, *Phil. 4. 5. Let your moderation be known*

Phil. 4. 5.

unto

unto all men; the Lord is at hand: that is, let your moderation be in the love and desire of things lawfull and indifferent, of things in this world; be moderate in those things, that they may not hinder you in your course towards heaven, but not in any case to be moderate in religion; and that I shall make appear in these four particulars.

1 Moderate estates do not content you in the world. Men rise up early, and go to bed late, and eat the bread of carefulnesse, and are eager and indefatigable in their pursuits of the world? If you get not so much this year, you will indeavour to get more the next year; no man hath moderation after the things of this world, no man is contented with that estate they are in, but labours to improve it. Like the Chaldeans, of whom it is spoken, *Habak.* 2. 5. *He inlargeth his desire as hell, and is as death, and cannot be satisfied. But gathereth unto him, all nations, and heapeth unto him all people.* And is it reason that you that are so immoderate in the pursuit and desire of the things of this world, should be moderate in the things of heaven?

Habak. 2 5.

2 You have been very immoderate in your desires after your lusts before your conversion, and therefore in all reason you should not now be moderate in your desires after God and the things of God. How many times have you bin as it were sick till you have

have you accomplisht your ends in a sinful course, and will you not now be sick of love after Christ, and after heavenly things? Hast thou not burnt in lust, and will you now be key-cold in religion?

3 God doth expresse as great, yea more dislike of lukewarmnesse in religion, as if a man were of no religion. Famous is that instance of *Laodicea*, *Revel.* 3.15, 16. *I would thou were either cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, & neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.* Not that God would have men to continue in, or return to Paganisme or Judaisme, both of which his soul abhors; but onely because he doth exceedingly distaste lukewarmnesse in the profession of Christianity.

4 In a false religion men have shewed much zeal and forwardnesse, *Isa.* 46.6. *They lavish gold out of the bag, and weigh silver in the balance, & hire a Goldsmith, and he maketh it a god, they fall down, yea they worship, &c.* The people were so violent in an Idolatrous religion, that they did spare no cost nor pains to accomplish it. So those false Prophets, those prophets and worshippers of *Baal*, 1 *King.* 18.28. *They cried aloud, and cut themselves after their manner with knives and lancets till the blood gushed out upon them.* So *Paul* when he was a Jew and adversary to Christianity; *beyond measure he persecuted the Church of God, and wasted it*, *Gal.* 1.13.

Isa. 46.6. 1 *Kings* 18.28.

שתף notes to gush out or poure out swiftly and plentifully. *Gal.* 1.13

Jerem.

Jerem. 32. 35. Those superstitious Jews *built the high places of Baal, which are in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to cause their sons and their daughters to passe through the fire unto Moloch, which I commanded them not.* So zealous and fervent were they in their Idolatrous worship and service, that they would cause their children to be burnt as a sacrifice to their false god. So likewise among us the Papists are zealous and eager for their worship, witnesse their whippings and scourgings and fastings and other penances. If men be thus zealous in false wayes, how fervent should we be in a true? But so much for the first branch of the Caution. *Jer.* 32. 35.

2. Take heed you do not think you shall ever go to heaven without this holy zeal and violence. It was only the violent in *John* Baptists dayes that took heaven. You can never go to heaven except you strive to enter in at the strait gate. You must strive till you sweat, you must strive with all your might, and all will be little enough. Take heed therefore you do not think it an easie thing to go to heaven. But withall take this, though you cannot go to heaven without this holy violence, you shall never go to heaven for it. *James* 1. 25. *Whosoever looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetfull hearer of the Word, but a doer also, this man shall be blessed in his deed.* So that you see a man shall *Caution* 2. *Iam.* 1. 25.

shall not go to heaven for his doing, though he cannot go to heaven without it.

Cant.3. 2 When you see the servants of God zealous and violent in the wayes of God, take heed you do not judge of this as the world doth, that you do not judge it a vain and needlesse thing, or that you do not judge it folly and madnesse. When *Paul* was thus violent for the propagation of the Gospel, when he came before *Festus*, *Festus* told him, that much learning had made him mad: But *Paul* said, I am not mad, but speak forth the words of truth and sobernes.

Cant.4. 3 Take heed thou doest not abate thy zeal in the matters of religion, because it may be thou meetest with much reproach and many scandals from the men of the world for the sake of religion. *David* was more eager in his dancing before the Ark, notwithstanding the scoffings of his wife. If scandals and reproaches and troubles will make thee abate thy zeal for God, thou wilt never be able to hold out to the end. I will never believe that man will indure a rack for his religion, that cannot bear a reproach. He that cannot indure a frown for it will never indure fire and faggot; if thou canst not indure a taunt or jeer for thy profession of religion, much lesse wilt thou endure a Gibbet. And so much for the use of Caution.

Use 5. The next use is this: This Doctrine may stirre

stirre up in us an holy lamentation, if it vvere so, that in the dayes of *John* the Baptist men were so lustily violent after Jesus Christ and his Ordinances; then how should we lament and bewail our times, when we consider hovv defective men are novv adayes, and hovv much vve fall short of those converts at the first plantation of the Gospel?

For lamentation for the apostasie of our times. We fall short of primitive Christians in three regards.

We fall short of them. 1 In regard of their love and union. It was observed that the primitive Christians were so full of love and affection to one another, that they could be acquainted together as well in half an hour as in half a year. In those times they were so conversant in that duty of love, that St. *Paul* saith, *They needed not that he should write vnthem concerning love*, 1 *Thess.* 4. 9. In those dayes they were of one accord. The very Heathens took notice of it, and said: Behold, how the Christians love one another. But we are fallen into those times wherein the love of men grows cold; we, upon whom the ends of the world are come, bite, and teare, and devour one another.

1 In love.

1 *Thes.* 4. 9.

2 We come short of them in the contempt of the world. You know hovv much those Christians, *Hebr.* 11. lived above the vvorld: *They confessed that they were but strangers and pilgrims upon earth, verse* 13. They vvere not satisfied vvith

2 In contempt of the world.

the vvorld, but sought after a better Countrey. *They came and laid their wealth at the Apostles feet to do with it whatsoever he pleased.* For cloathing they vvere contented with sheeps skins and goats skins; and instead of our stately houses they vvere satisfied vvith dens and caves of the earth.

3 We fall short of the primitive Christians herein also, that they vvere taken off from that form of religion vvherein they vvere born and bred up, and received a nevv form of religion. Whereas they might have objected, all our fathers vvere bred up in the law of *Moses*, and shall vve take upon us a nevv vvay, a nevv religion? But they did not contend about it, they forsook the rudiments of *Moses*, and imbraced this nevv vvay and doctrine, vvhich as they thought vvas never taught before. But vve are more addicted to customes then Scriptures, vve chuse rather to follovv vvhat hath been, then to consider vvhat should be. Many have much reasoning and contention for the old forme of religion. Many are so setled in their old formes and wayes, wherein they were born and bred, that they will not indure or seek for a better form and way. *Heylin* in his Geography reports of the King of *Morocco*, that he told the English Embassadour in King *Johns* time, that he had lately read *Pauls* Epistles, which he liked so well, that were he

he to chuſe his religion, he would imbrace Chriſtianity; but every one ought to die in the faith wherein he was born: So it is with many among us, they are perſwaded they ought, and reſolved they will live and die in thoſe cuſtomes and wayes wherein they were born; they will not deny themſelves in theſe triviall things for the exaltation of Chriſt; and herein alſo we fall ſhort of the primitive Chriſtians. And thus much for the laſt uſe. And ſo I have diſpatched the firſt and main Doctrine, That in the times of the firſt promulgation of the Goſpel greater ſucceſſe did attend the Miniſtery, and multitudes did come in with more holy violence after the ordinances then ever did before.

MATTHEW 11. 12.

And from the dayes of John *the Baptist untill now, the Kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.*

Sermons Preacht at Lawrence Jury, May 6, 1649. SERMON V.

THere is but one Doctrine behinde, and that is taken from the consideration of the quality of those persons who did expresse this holy violence; who they were our Saviour himselfe acquaints us, *Matth.*21.31. *Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, that the publicans and harlots go into the Kingdome of God before you. Verse* 32. *The publicans and harlots believed John.* The Pharisees that led strict lives, had a kinde of legall righteousnesse, yet they were not the people that did receive

Mat. 21. 31, 32.

receive Jesus Christ, but publicans and harlots. *The Pharisees and lawyers rejected or frustrated the counsell of God against themselves*, or *within themselves, being not baptized of him. But the Publicans justified God, being baptized with the baptisme of John*, Luke 7. 29,30. They that used this violence were men that lived by rapine, deceit, exaction, and oppression; so did the Publicans. Whence the observation is this. *Luke 7. 29,30.*

That usually those that have been most sinful before conversion, do expresse the more holy violence and eagernesse of affection after Jesus Christ in the Gospel after they are converted: In the handling of this point I shall do three things. *Doct. 2.*

1 I shall demonstrate the truth of it by Scripture-instances.

2 I shall shew the reasons why God did pitch upon such chiefly, who were most notorious ill-livers.

3 I shall shew why such men are more violent in religion then others.

1 I shall demonstrate the truth of the doctrine by Scripture-instances. I shall give but two instances; the one in *Mary Magdalene*, the other in *Paul*. 1 *Mary Magdalene*, she was an unclean person, a very harlot, a great sinner, but after her conversion she thought nothing too much for Christ. 1 She anointed his feet with a pound of Spikenard that was very costly, worth three *Proved by example. Magdalene.*

hundred pence, that is, worth above nine pound in our money, *John* 12. 5. 2 She broke through many difficulties to come to Christ. Christ was in another mans house, (and he *Simon* a Pharisee) *Luke* 7. 36, 37. and set down to supper. She might have raised an objection, and said, I cannot come at him, and they in the house may think evill of it; but all this could not keep her back. Further, there were more discouragements. Not onely *Judas* but others were angry at her, *Mark* 14. 4. *There were some (not onely Judas, but others also) that had indignation within themselves, and said, Why was this waste of the ointment made?* Yea, the Disciples too had indignation at her: *Mat.* 26. 8. *The Disciples had indignation.* Yet she came to Christ through al these difficulties, and she wept, *Luke* 7. 44. *And that so plentifully, that she washed the feet of Christ with her tears.* Her eyes that had been windows of lust, were now flood-gates of tears.

John 12. 5.

Luke 7. 36, 37.

Mark 14. 4.

Mat. 26. 8.

Luke 7. 44.

2 Another instance is that of *Saul*. Before his conversion he was a notorious sinner. He had an hand in the death of that holy man *Stephen*, *Act* 8. 1. He was a man that breathed out threatenings and slaughters against the Disciples of the Lord, *Act.* 9. 1. He was a blasphemer, a persecutor, and injurious, 1 *Tim.* 1. 13. he cared not what he did to the people of God. Yea, further he did compel others to blaspheme

Acts 8. 1.

Acts 9. 1.

1 *Tim.* 1. 13.

Act.

Act. 26. 11. and being exceedingly mad against them, he persecuted them even to strange Cities. And yet behold, this man that was so eminent a sinner before his conversion, afterward made recompense; he grew and abounded in grace; he grew as eminent in grace, as he was notorious in sin. As he had hailed men to prison formerly, so now he drawes them to Christ. He preached that faith that once he persecuted, *Gal.* 1. 23. So much for the first particular, the proof of the point by Scripture-instances.

Acts 26. 11.

Gal. 1. 23

The second particular is this: Why did God pitch upon such chiefly, as were most notorious ill-livers?

Quest. Why did God call such vile persons?

I answer; Two reasons may be given of it.

Answ. 1.

1 To beat off the Pharisees from resting in their own righteousnesse, that they might see that salvation was of grace, and not of works. Had this effect appeared in multitudes of the Scribes and Pharisees, some would have attributed it to their learning, others to their strict and holy walking, and austere conversation, people would have thought they had merited this at Gods hands; And therefore God passed by them, and made choice of others far more unholy and profane, to knock them off from their own righteousnesse, and from dependance upon it.

2 It was to magnifie the riches, freeneſs and greatneſſe of Gods grace, that was brought in and manifeſted by the Goſpel. God would hereby give to underſtand that the doctrine of the Goſpel was a doctrine of grace (not that men might live as they liſt, for theſe vile people were not incouraged in, but redeemed from a vain converſation, but) *Johns* work was a tough and hard work to pull down thoſe that were as high as mountains in pride, as hard as the rocks of thoſe mountains, to make rough and crooked things ſmooth and ſtraight. And yet all this *John* was to do, all this *John* did in the preparation of the people for Chriſt, *Iſa.*40.4. The greater the wound is, the more is the skill and care of the Phyſician ſeen and commended. The more and greater the ſins are that are pardoned, the more is the grace of God advanced.

So much for the ſecond particular.

Why are ſuch moſt zealous? *Anſ.* 1.

The third particular is this: Why are ſuch vile and ſinfull perſons moſt eager and violent after their converſion?

Anſw. 1. This proceeds from an holy indignation againſt themſelves, which is a fruit of repentance or converſion, as you read, 2 *Cor.*7.11. *For this ſelf-ſame thing that ye ſorrowed after a godly ſort, what careſulneſſe did it work in you? yea what clearing of your ſelves, yea what indignation, yea what fear, yea what deſire, yea what zeal, yea what revenge?*

2 *Cor.*7. 11.

There

There ariſeth in ſuch a deſire to be revenged upon themſelves, *Iſa.*30.22. *Te ſhall defile alſo the covering of the graven images of ſilver, and the ornament of thy molten images of gold, thou ſhalt caſt them away as a menſtruous cloth, thou ſhalt ſay unto them, Get thee hence.* *Iſa.*2.20. *In that day a man ſhall caſt his idols of ſilver, and his idols of gold which they have made, each one for himſelf to worſhip, to the moles and to the bats.* *Cranmer* burned his right hand firſt, becauſe it had ſubſcribed his recantation, and oftentimes repeated in the flame, Oh this unworthy right hand! An holy indignation makes him to reaſon thus within himſelf. Could I ſin worſe then others, and ſhall I now be contented with leſſe grace then others? Could I be as ſwift as a Dromedary in the wayes of ſin, and ſhall I creep like a ſnail in the wayes of God? Have I been zealous for the committing of ſin, and ſhall I be cold in my motions after Chriſt? Such perſons are aſhamed of their former wayes, and therefore they now labour to take off that reproach by making ſome reparations.

*Iſa.*30. 22.

*Iſa.*2.20

2 This proceeds from that ſenſe that is in ſuch perſons of an utter and abſolute neceſſity of getting into Chriſt. You know a man that hath but cut his finger will not make much ado, but he that hath got a great and dangerous wound ſees a neceſſity of the cure, and that he is a dead man if he

he do not get help. So a man that lives in a common way of sinning, he thinks his sins are inconsiderable, he sees no necessity of closing with Christ for cure. But a man that hath been much in sin, and notorious in wickednesse, when God comes and opens his eyes by effectuall calling, he sees a necessity of getting help by Jesus Christ, and that if he have not Christ, he is undone for ever, he shall perish eternally. And thus I have finished the doctrinal part: I proceed now to make application. And this doctrine is eminently usefull to three sorts of men. 1 To those that have been formerly very vile and great sinners, but are now converted. 2 To meer civill and honest men. 3 To those that yet remain and go on in a sinfull course.

Use 1. To great sinners converted

1 To those that have been formerly very great sinners, but are now converted: To them I have two things to say.

1 Labour to follow this pattern that is here propounded in the Gospel, and in this doctrine. Labour to proportion your graces now that you are converted, to the number and greatnesse of your sins before conversion. As you have been violent in sin formerly, so see that now you be as violent after the things of heaven. So did *Manasses*, he was a great sinner, he filled *Jerusalem* with blood, he was a grosse Idolater, a destroyer of Gods worship,

2 *Chron.*

2 *Chron.* 33.12. And therefore *he humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers.* So *Paul*, because he was a greater sinner then the rest of the Apostles; therefore he laboured more abundantly then they all. If therefore sin hath abounded, see that grace doth abound also. As you have formerly added iniquity unto iniquity, so now see that you adde grace to grace. As you have with much eagernesse given up the members of your bodies, as instruments of unrighteousnesse unto sin and uncleannesse; so see that you give them up as instruments of righteousnesse unto holinesse. Particularly, see that you do abound, 1 In the grace of humiliation. 2 In the grace of love. 1 In the grace of humiliation; little humiliation is not suitable to great sins. That garment that hath most spots in it, must have most rinsing; that which hath most dust in it, needs the most beating. There must be a *ficut*, not onely *qualitatis*, but *æqualitatis* also, if possibly it can be. There should be some equality between the strength that was put forth in the service of sin, and that we now put forth in the service of God. It is very observable, *Levit.*11.24, 25. *He that toucheth an unclean thing, shall be unclean till even; but he that beareth an unclean thing, shall wash his cloathes, and be unclean till even.* Though a man be but defiled a little with sin, if he doth but touch a sin as it

2 *Chron.* 33.12.

*Levit.*11 24,25.

it were, commit a little sin, he had need be humbled; but those that wallow in sinfull courses, and bear sin about them, they must look to be more humbled then others were.

2 See that you proportion your love to Christ to your sinfulnesse against Christ in times past. Hast thou been a great and a vile sinner before conversion, know that a little love to Christ is not answerable to thy great sins. *Luke* 7.47. *Her sins which are many are forgiven her, therefore she loved much.* Jesus Christ expects and requires more love of such to whom he hath pardoned much, then he doth of those to whom little is forgiven. We read in *John* 21.15. Jesus said unto *Peter*, *Simon, son of Jonas, Lovest thou me more then these?* Jesus Christ did not ask him, Lovest thou me at all? nor, Lovest thou me as these? but, Lovest thou me more then these? Thou hast sinned more then these, doest thou love me more then these? Christ expected more love from *Peter* then from the rest of the Disciples. And so *Peter* did return more love to Christ then the rest did. And though the book of the Acts be called the Acts of the Apostles, yet there is more spoken of *Peter* then of all the rest of the Apostles that had seen Christ in the flesh. *Peter* after his fall did shew more love then the rest. 1 *Peter* preached the first Sermon after Christs resurrection and ascension, *Act.* 1. 15.

John 21. 15.

Acts 1. 15.

15. 2 *Peter* was the first that went into the Sepulchre after Christs death and resurrection. Although *Peter* and *John* did run to the Sepulchre, & *John* out-ran *Peter*, and came first thither, yet *Peter* first went down into the Sepulchre to see where Christ was laid, *John* 20.6. 3 When Christ after his resurrection was walking upon the waters, *Peter* cast himself into the Sea to go to meet Jesus, he had no patience to stay till he came at him, *Joh.* 21.7. 4 *Peter* converted more souls to Christ then all the rest of the Apostles did, 3000 souls at one Sermon. 5 *Peter* died for Christ, he was crucified for Christ; and he desired that he might be crucified with his head downward, because he thought it was too much honour for him to die as his Master. So you see that as *Peter* had been more treacherous to his master then the rest; so *Peter* was more ardent in his love to Christ then the rest. And so you must all learn to see, that as your sins have been more and greater then the sins of other men; so your humiliation must be more, your love must be stronger. That is the first branch of the first Use.

John 20. 6.

John 21. 7.

2 This may teach you to magnifie the riches and freeness of Gods grace, that God should cast an eye of grace and love upon such a wretch as thou wast; that God should passe by such men as the strict Pharisee, and pitch upon thee: that God should

should not make thee as exemplary in punishment as thou wast in sin; that thou shouldest be made a monument of his mercy, who deserved to be a spectacle of wrath; that God should make his mercy to rest upon thee, that might cause his justice to take hold upon thee. So much for the first Use.

Use 2. To civill men.

2 This Doctrine is usefull to men of a civil carriage, of an honest and in-offensive behaviour in the world, that have been religiously educated, lived ingenuously, that never broke out into such grosse and exorbitant courses as other men have done:

To you I would say three things.

1 Whereas you say, that you are of a more civill life then others, and so you are apt to perswade your selves your case is better then others: Consider, others are more easily and ordinarily converted then you are: Publicans go to heaven before you. You read in *Luke* 18.14. the Publican went away justified rather then the Pharisee. *Luther* hath a notable glosse upon these words: It is far more easie for harlots and notorious sinners to be saved, then for proud titular Saints; because the former are easily brought to a sense of their sins, but the latter are like to perish in the conceit of their own righteousnesse, except they be converted in an extraordinary manner. This I speak, not that I would diswade you from

Luke 18. 14. *Longè possibilius est meretrices & notorios peccatores salvari, quàm superbos sanctulos; illi enim tandem cognun-*

from a civill course of life, or draw you to an open profaneness; but that you may not rest upon your moral accomplishments, upon your good meanings, and think that you are sermon-proof, that the Minister can hardly meet with your corruptions and consciences.

tur sentire sua peccata, bi verò in persuasione propriæ sanctitatis moriuntur, nisi mirabili modo convertuntur.

2 If God doth convert such men usually, they are not so eminent in grace then others. This is expressed, *Luke* 7.43, *&c.* He to whom most is forgiven, loves most, and doth most service. Usually such content themselves with smaller measures of grace, then they whose transgressions have exceeded.

Luke 7. 43.

3 What thy sins want in bulk and magnitude, thou makest up in number; *Your transgressions are many, your back-slidings are increased*, *Jerem.* 5.6. Thy continuance in sins makes thy sins equivalent to greater sins; if your sins fall short of others in nature, it may be they exceed in aggravations; it may be thou sinnest against more mercy, more knowledge: it may be thou maiest have more sin in thine heart, though anothers sins do more break out in his life.

Jer. 5.6.

So much for the second Use.

3 This Doctrine is usefull to profane men, to the looser sort.

Use 3. To profane men in two regards.

1 Let this be an invitation and incouragement to you to come in to Christ, and to imbrace the Gospel. 1 Though your sins be

be great, yet they are not so great as the mercies of God. The mercy of God is compared to a sea; the sea, you know, is a very great deep. A great Leviathan may be covered in the sea, as well as a little fish; a great rock as well as a little pebble.

Isa. 44. 22. A remarkable place you have, *Isa.* 44. 22. *I have blotted out as a thick cloud thy transgressions, and as a cloud thy sins; return unto me, for I have redeemed thee.* The Sun can scatter both thick and thin clouds.

2 Though thou hast been very sinfull, yet thy conversion taketh away all infamy from thee. *Paul* was once a blasphemer, &c. but that reproach was rolled away, when through the grace of God he found mercy. It is very observable, that in the genealogy of Christ there are but four women mentioned, (it is not usuall to mention women in genealogies) and the Scripture sets a mark of infamy upon them all. The first is *Thamar*, *Matth.* 1. 3. *Mat.* 1. 3 *Gen.* 38. 38. she was an incestuous woman, for she lay with her father in law, as it is recorded, *Gen.* 38. 38. The second is *Rahab*, *verse* 5. she was an harlot, *Heb.* 11. 31. *Heb.* 11. 31. The third is *Ruth*, *verse* 5. she came of *Moab*, the son of *Lot* by incest, begotten of his own daughter, *Gen.* 19. 37. *Gen.* 19. 37. The fourth is *Bathsheba*, *vers.* 6. she was guilty of adultery. This is done for the comfort and incouragement of the most infamous sinners to come in to Christ.

3 If

3. If God call you, you are likely to be greater instruments of his glory then others. A persecuting *Saul* became a preaching *Paul*; a wanton *Mary* became a weeping *Mary*; she, whose whoredomes had been spoken of in all the places where she dwelt, afterward her grace came to be spoken of wheresoever the Gospel was preached. So much for the first branch of that use.

2. Because Doctrines of comfort many men suck poyson from, and so get their ruine; therefore I shall lay down a Caution or two. Take heed you do not abuse this doctrine.

1. Do not make the conversion of any scandalous sinner to be any stumbling block in your way to heaven. It was the great stumbling block in the way of the Pharisees, when they saw that Christ would eat meat with Publicans and sinners, they said, He was a friend of Publicans and sinners. Do not entertain hard thoughts of Christ, nor of the wayes of Christ for that. Indeed, if religion were any cloak for sin, if it did countenance and incourage men in sin, it were something; but it is that which makes of a sinner a Saint. Conversion, though it finde us vile and bad, it doth not leave us so.

2. Take heed you do not suck this poison from it, that when you hear, the worse men are before conversion, the better they will

be after conversion. Some, it may be, will draw this inference from it: That it is the best to be as vile and wicked as one can, for so one shall be most zealous afterward. Take heed of that. For

1 It is a great question whether God will convert thee or not; and if thou be not converted, all thy sins will be so many cords to tie thee in hell; the aggravations of thy sin will be additions to thy torment and punishment.

2 The deeper thou art in sin, the greater must thy humiliation be. Will any wise man break his leg, because a broken bone well set and knit again will be stronger then ever it was before. Knotty timber shall have most blowes.

3 The longer thou continuest in sin, the longer will God keep thee under suspension, and it will be long before he vouchsafeth the comforts of his Spirit, he will fill thee with indignation and horrour. Though great sins cannot *vastare gratiam*, lay waste the grace of God, yet they may *vastare conscientiam*, lay waste the peace of conscience; though it may be they will not put thee into a state of ejection, yet they will bring thee into a state of dejection. If thou art not cast off, yet thou shalt be cast down; and therefore take heed thou doest not abuse this precious doctrine.

And so much for this last use.

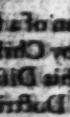
And

And so I have done with both Doctrines, and finished the Text; *And from the dayes of John the Baptist untill now the Kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.*

FINIS.

CHRISTIAN
Holding Communion
with God, in wrastling and importunate Prayer.

LUKE 11. 8.



The zealous CHRISTIAN Holding Communion with God, in wrastling and importunate Prayer.

Sermons preached at *Lawrence Jury* in *London*, *June* 18. 1649.

LUKE 11. 8.

I say unto you, though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity, he will give unto him as many as he needeth.

Context.

MY Text is the conclusion of a familiar Parable used by Christ, whereby he Instructs his Disciples touching the Doctrine and use of prayer. The occasion offered to Christ to fall upon this Subject, is intimated ver. 1. of this chapter, *One of his*

Disciples said unto him, Lord teach us to pray as John also taught his disciples. Whether it was one of the twelve Apostles, or one of the seventy Disciples that propounded the question is not cause to determine, nor is it materiall to know; Hereupon Christ gives them a platforme or directions for prayer; to direct them about the matter, and withall, gives them a parable to informe concerning the manner of praying. For the matter of it, you have it in these words, when you pray, say *Our father &c.* Not as though it were a command from Jesus Christ, that alwayes when we pray, we should use that forme of speech which is here set down. Jesus Christ indeed intended it for a platforme, or a patterne to direct us in the making of our prayers; for there is nothing we stand in need of, and goe to God for, but it is to be found in these words; but he never intended to tye up his people to this forme. And that will prove by foure reasons.

Lords prayer is not commanded to be used.

Reas. 1. 1. Because though *Luke* here saith, *when you pray, Say, Our &c.* yet *Matthew* varies in his expression and saith, *when you pray, say after this manner, Mat. 6. 9.* to teach us that we are to stick to the matter contained in this prayer; but we are not confined every time we pray, to use the same expressions. By *Luke* we learne, that the using of this forme of words is lawfull,

lawfull, by Matthew, thus it is not neces-
sary.

A second reason is this: Because in the rectum of the Lords prayer, by Matthew and Luke there is much difference; and though the difference be not materiall, yet it is verball, which is enough to prove what I intend, to wit, that we are not bound to the words. In the third Petition it is thus in Matthew, Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven: in Luke it is thus, thy will be done as it becomes. So in the fourth Petition it is said in Matthew, Give us this day our daily bread: in Luke it is said, Give us daily our daily bread. In the fifth Petition it is said in Matthew, forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors: in Luke it is said, forgive us our sins, for we forgive every one that is indebted to us. Lastly, it is said in Matthew, For thine is the Kingdome, the power and the glory for ever. Amen. But these words are wholly left out in Luke. Which variance teacheth us thus much, that you must not recede from the matter, or purport of the words, yea we are not to be superstitious and scrupulous about the expressions, as Chemnitius observes.

Reas. 2.

Ne de verbis nimis superstitiosè solliciti simus.

3. Another reason to prove, that we are not limited to that forme, is this. Because Jesus Christ himselfe, and all his Apostles did never use this forme in all their prayers. And if there had been a

Reas. 3.

necessity that we should have used it, Christ would (as he might easily) have left a command behinde him in the word, and also he would have practised it himselfe, that it might have been our example. This reason Chemnitius gives; There are many prayers in David Psalmes, many in the Prophets, many in the Acts of the Apostles, many in the Epistles of Paul, which are different an expression from this forme, and yet doubtlesse received acceptance from God b.

b Multæ sunt precationes in Psalmis Davidicis, multæ in Prophetis, multæ in Actis Apostolicis, multæ in Epistolis Pauli, &c. Rea. 1.

A Reas. Another argument is this, Because it is the worke, and office of the Spirit of God, not onely to help the people of God in the manner how, but also in the matter what to pray: to put even words into our mouthes. Rom. 8. 26. *We know not what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit helpes our infirmities.* And upon these grounds it appeares that we are not bound to use that forme of words. Ministers doe sometimes use this forme of prayer, to iustifie the lawfulnesse of it, and sometimes they doe not use it, least people should dote too much upon set formes. And so much for the matter of prayer: I come now to the manner, and that is expressed in this Parable, which Parable is laid downe in the 5. of Luke. *And he said unto them, which of you shall have a friend, and shall goe unto him at midnight,*

Rom. 8. 26.

Luke 11. 5, 6, 7, 8.

and

and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves: For a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him. And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not, the doore is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee. I say unto you, though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend; yet because of his importunity he will arise and give him as many as he needeth. Which Parable consists of two parts.

1. A Prayer.

2. An answer to it.

In the prayer here are foure parts.

1. The relation of the person praying, to him to whom he prayes, his friend verse 4. Which of you shall have a friend, &c. Whence observe God must be a friend to us, before any of our prayers can be accepted.

2. The time of his address, ver. 5. at midnight, in times of greatest need, of extreamest necessity, Isa. 26. 9. With my soule have I desired thee in the night. From whence observe That the thickest time for Gods people to be earnest in prayer to God, is a time of trouble.

3. The matter of his request, Lend me three loaves. By which some interpreters understand the three persons in the Trinity, the Father, the Son, and the holy Ghost. Some refer them to the three cardinall

The coherence.

Rom. 8. 26.

Isai. 26. 9.

Luke 11. 5, 7.

nall graces, Faith, Hope, and Charity; but these are vaine interpretations. It is observable, that in Parables some things are used for ornament onely, not for the sense. The intent and designe of it is this, That we are to order our prayers according to our present necessities.

4. There is the occasion of this request, *verse 6. A friend of mine is come to me, and I have nothing ere.*

The Answer returned to this request is double.

1. By way of negation, *verse 7. Trouble me not* &c. Observe, that Gods people may have deniall to their prayers. The reason of this deniall is, *the doore is now shut and my children are with me in bed.* There are some times when Gods own people may pray to him, yet he shut his eares to their prayers, God will as it were hide himselfe from the prayers of his own people, that they shall not come at him. Not onely the doores are shut, but his Children are in bed with him. These children here spoken of are the creatures of God, from whence observe. That there may be times, when God may take away all his creature comforts from his own people, that they shall not any wayes be helpfull to them.

2. By way of concession, and that is in the words of the text, *I say unto you, though*

though he will not arise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity, he will arise and give him as many as he needs.

In which words you have first the relation of him that prayes, to him whom he prayes, a friend. Observe: *There must be a state of friendship between God and a friend before his prayers can be heard.*

The Text divided.

2. The condition upon which the prayer was heard, and that is set down two wayes.

Negatively, he will heare him, not because he is his friend.

Positively, he will heare him because of his importunity.

Obs. 1. *That meerely a state of friendship and reconciliation with God is not a sufficient ground for us, to beleeve that our prayers shall be heard, and accepted by God.*

Obs. 2. *There must be an holy importunity, even in Gods own friends, in their prayers, which they expect a gracious returne.*

3. Here is the amplification of the concession: There is more given in the concession then was desired in the supplication. He desired but three Dayes, *and because of his holy importunity, he did rise and give him as many as he needed.*

Whence observe; That where there is an holy importunity in our prayers, God doth, in his returnes to that soule, give more then was desired.

The first part of the text was the relation of the prayer, to him, to whom he makes his prayer. The observation is this.

Doct. 1. *A man must be brought into a state of friendship, or reconciliation with God, before any prayer he makes can be accepted.*

I will prove this doctrine by three reasons, and then apply it.

The reasons are three.

Reas. 1. God accepteth not the person for the prayer's sake, but the prayer for the person's sake. We read Gen. 4. 4. *God hath respect unto Abel and unto his offering*; first to *Abel*, then to his sacrifice. God did accept of his service, because his person was in a state of favour with God; God is first pleased with the worker, before he can accept the worke. This is also laid down Heb. 11. 5. *By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death, for before his translation he had this testimony that he pleased God.* Now without faith in Christ to justifie thy person, thou canst not please God. Here lies the great difference between the Papists and us. The Papists say that works justifie the person, we say, the person justifies the worke; for make the tree good, and the fruit must needs be good.

Reas. 2. Because, till we be brought into that state of reconciliation, we have no share in the intercession, satisfaction and righteousnesse

[illegible] of Jesus Christ. And till we have a share in them, our prayers cannot be accepted. Jesus could not receive the blessing from his father, but in the garments of his elder brother; nor can we receive any thing from the hands of God, but in the Robes of Christ. No prayer can be accepted by God, but in and through the intercession of Jesus Christ. If Christ be not an intercessor in Heaven, no prayer will be heard on Earth. In the 8. Chapter of Revel. v. 3. it is written, there was an Angel that came and stood at the Altar, having a golden censer, and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all Saints upon the golden Altar, which was before the throne. The word in the Greek is to this purpose, That he should add it to the prayers of the Saints. As if the prayer of Christ and a Believer were all one. In the 56. of Isa. 7. God promiseth, I will bring my people to my holy mountain; and make them joyful in my house of prayer, &c. In the Hebrew it is thus, I will make them joyful in the house of my prayer. Our prayers are but as so many cyphers, that signifie nothing, till the intercession of Christ is added to them; without that they cannot be accepted.

Doct. 1.

Reas. 1.

Rev. 8. 3.

Ἵνα δώσῃ ταῖς προσευχαῖς τῶν ἁγίων.

Isa. 56. 7.

בבית תפלוזי

3. Because, till we are in a state of friendship and reconciliation, we have not the assistance of God's Spirit to help us; and if we have not the assistance of the Spirit,

Reas. 3.

Spirit, we shall never finde acceptance with him. All requests that are not dictated by the Spirit, are but the breathings of the flesh, which God regards not. Now till we are reconciled to God, we cannot have the Spirit, Gal. 4. 6. *And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba Father.* So that till you be sons, you cannot have the Spirit.

Gal. 4. 6.

And so much for the reasons: I come now to the application.

Use 1.

If this be so, that a man must be in a state of friendship before his prayers can be accepted; Hence learn, That all that ever thou dost before that estate, is odious to God. Not onely thy sinful actions, but even thy civil, thy natural, yea, thy religious actions. Not that they are so in themselves, or in regard of God, but in regard of the doer of it, Psal. 109. 7. —— *let his prayer be turned into sin.* Thou makest a prayer against sin, God will turn thy prayers into sin. Many prayers cannot turn one sin into a grace, but one sin wilfully, and resolutely continued in, can turn all thy prayers into sin, Prov. 21. 27. *The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord; how much more when he bringeth it with a wicked minde.* A diseased body, turns that food into corrupt humors, which an healthful body doth into sound nourishment. I have read of a precious

Psa. 109. 7.

Prov. 21. 27.

stone

stone that had excellent vertue in it, but lost all its efficacy, if it was put into a dead mans mouth. Prayer is an Ordinance of great excellency, of great efficacy; but if it be in a dead mans mouth, if it come out of the heart of one that is dead in trespasses and sins, it looseth all its virtue: water that is pure in the fountain, is corrupted in the channel.

2. This doctrine overthrowes one main pillar of the Romish religion, justification by works. If God accepteth of the person before he accepts the work, how can any person be justified by works? Unlesse thy person be justified, unlesse thou art reconciled, thy works are wicked works; and can wicked works justifie? Good works make not a man good, but a good man makes a work good; and shall a work that a man made good, return again and make the man good? If we had no other reason against justification by works (saith *Bernius*) but this, it were sufficient. *Use 2.*

3. Let this teach you, not onely to look to the fitnesse and disposednesse of your hearts in prayer, but also to make inquiry what thou art that prayest. It is our duty, and it is very good to look to the qualification of the heart in prayer, to look to the qualification of the duty; but the main work is to look after the qualification of the person, and to see whether thou art in *Use 3.*

a state

a state of favour and reconciliation with God; for, if the person be not in favour with God, you may be confident the petitions will not be heard nor accepted, but God looks upon it as the corrupt breathings of thy sinful and corrupt heart. You are to look therefore in the performance of duty, whether you can go to God in prayer as a Father. There are many that look after the qualification of their duty; but few look after the qualification of the person, to see whether they be justified or no, whether God be their friend or not. But we should mainly look to this; for let the heart of a man be never so well disposed, (let us suppose it, for indeed no unreconciled men can be well disposed, to speak properly,) yet if thy person be not justified, thy prayer cannot be accepted. God cares not for the Rhetorick of prayers, how eloquent they are; nor for the Arithmetick of prayers, how many they are; nor for the Logick of them, how rational and methodical they are; nor for the Musick of them, what an harmony and melody of words thou hast; but he looks at the divinity of prayers, which is from the qualification of a person, from a justified person, and in a sanctified manner. It is good to enquire, Is my heart right? Is my mind composed? Are my affections raised, kindled in prayer? But chiefly enquire, is

my

my person accepted of God?

4. Let me give a caution here, Take heed you do not mistake this Doctrine: Let no man think, that because God accepts no prayer, except the person be justified, therefore wicked men are excused from prayer; for though God doth not accept of every mans prayer, yet every man in the world ought to pray; For

1. They must pray as creatures, that stand in need of their Creator. The Ravens cry, and God giveth them meat.

2. The Lord blames wicked men for not praying to him, Jer. 10. 25. *Pour out thy wrath upon the Heathen that knew thee not, and upon the families that call not upon thy Name,* Rom. 3. 11. *There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.*

3. They are commanded to pray, Act. 8. 22, 23. *Peter said to Simon Magus, Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee; for I perceive thou art in the gall of bitterness, and bonds of iniquity.*

Vse 4.

Jer. 10. 25.

Rom. 3. 11.

Act. 22. 23.

LUKE.

LUKE 11. 8.

II. SERMON.

Though he will not — give him because he is his friend, &c.

AND thus much for the first Doctrine, and first part of the Text, the relation between him that prayes, and him to whom prayers are made. I come now to the second part, which is the condition upon which the prayer was heard; and that I fold you was set down two wayes.

1. Negatively.
2. Positively.

1. Negatively, Not because he is his friend.

The observation thence is this,

Doct. 2. *That a state of friendship, or reconciliation with God, is not sufficient to assure a man that God will give returns to his prayers.* Although a man must be brought into a state of friendship and favour with God, before his prayers can be heard: yet it is not a sufficient ground for a man to believe, that God will give him an answer of all his prayers. *He will give unto him, not because*

be his friend. So that a godly man may make many prayers, and yet God may not give any answer to his prayers.

In the handling of this Doctrine, I shall do three things.

1. Shew the reasons of the Doctrine.
2. I shall shew, in what case God may refuse to give his own people the things that they pray for.
3. I shall shew how we may know when God denies to hear our prayers, whether the denial be in mercie.

SERMON II.

The first particular is the reason, why God may, and doth sometimes deny to hear the prayers of his friends: And that is this: Because God hath tied returns of prayer, not onely to the qualification of the person, but also to the qualification of the dutie; that the dutie be performed, not onely by a fit person, but also in a right way in a right manner, to a right end. God doth not say, Let a godly man pray how he will, I will hear his prayers; that were the way to make him to be carelesse and remisse in the performance of duties. Therefore the Lord expects qualification of the dutie, as well as of the person. God requires that duties be done with feeling, fervencie, faith, fear and reverence, they must be done in a right manner.

Reas.

There is a fivefold qualification that God

God requires, even of his friends, as a condition of their acceptance.

Psal. 10. 17. 1. The heart must be prepared, Psal. 10. 17. *Lord thou hast heard the desire of the humble, thou wilt prepare their heart, thou wilt cause thine ear to hear.* So Job 11. 13, 14, 15. *If thou prepare thine heart, and stretch out thine hand towards him. If iniquity be in thine hand, put it far away, and let not wickedness dwell in thy tabernacle. For then shalt thou lift up thy face without spot; yea, thou shalt be stedfast and shalt not fear.* That is the first particular.

Job 11. 13, 14, 15. 2. Sin must be removed. So you finde in the place last quoted, *iniquity must be put far away,* &c. When Gods own people come to worship before God, they must not let any sinne lye upon their consciences, unrepented of and indulged.

Psal. 25. 1. 3. The affections must be raised. *David,* when he set himself to prayer, he saith *Unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul,* Psal. 25. 1. You read often in Scripture, of lifting up a prayer to God, Isai. 37. 4. —*It may be the Lord thy God will hear the words of Rabshakeh, whom the king of Assyria hath sent,* —— *wherefore lift up thy prayer, for the remnant that is left.* Jer. 7. 16. *Pray not thou for this people, neither lift up cry nor prayer for them.* 1 Tim. 2. 8. *I will that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.*

Isai. 37. 4.

Jer. 7. 16.

1 Tim. 2. 8.

4. The

4. The mind must be composed in prayer, 1 Cor. 7. 35. *We are to attend upon the Lord without distraction.* Daniel *set his face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications,* Daniel 9. 3. *In the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee,* said *David,* Psal. 5. 3. As an Archer when he shoots an arrow, takes care that his hand shake not; his heart was so fixed on God, that he could directly send his prayers unto him. Dost thou think, O man, that God will hear that prayer which thou dost not hear thy self? will God regard that prayer, that thou dost not regard? will God grant thy request, when thou dost not know what thou asked, because of that indisposednesse and distraction that lyes upon thy spirit? You must therefore take care, when you betake your selves to prayer, that the Divel do not distract and disturb you.

4. 1 Cor. 7. 35. Dan. 9. 3. Psal. 5. 2. אערך more militari disponam.

5. The desires must be enlarged after God in prayer, Jer. 29. 13. *Then you shall seek me and finde me, when you search for me with all your heart.* God bids us *Open our mouthes wide, and I will fill them,* Psal. 18. 20. God hath not promised to fill the heart, unlesse our mouth be opened.

5.

Now put all these together! Our prayers will not be heard, except, 1. Our hearts be prepared. 2. Sin removed. 3. Our affections raised. 4. Our minds composed. 5. Our desires inlarged. And judge,

whether this be not ground enough for the Doctrine, That a state of friendship, is not sufficient for the acceptance of our prayers.

Qu ſt. When doth God deny requeſts.

I come now to the ſecond thing, and that is, a caſe of conſcience: it is this; In what Caſes may God refuſe to give his people the things they pray for? I anſwer.

Anſw. Pſal. 66. 18.

1. In caſe you indulge any ſin in the heart, Pſal. 66. 18. *If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear my prayer.* Sin which is in thine heart, by thine indulgence and approbation, doth provoke God, that he will not give an anſwer to thy prayers

1.

2. In caſe thou doſt ſeek for any mercy from God, to be fewel for thy ſin and luſt, James 4. 3. *Ye aske and receive not, becauſe ye aske amiſſe, that you may conſume it upon your luſts.* So the mother of *Zebedees* children, Matth. 20. 21. She ſaid to Chriſt, *Grant that theſe my two ſons may ſit, the one on thy right hand, the other on thy left in thy kingdom.* Now this was an ambitious deſire; for ſhe ſhewed Chriſt would have reigned upon earth, as an earthly King, and ſhe deſired that they might be next him, as he ſat upon the Throne. Therefore Chriſt ſaid, *You know not what you ask.* Chriſt would not give any anſwer to her requeſt; he would not gratifie her pride and ambition.

2.

Jam. 4. 3.

Mat. 20. 21.

3. In caſe God ſees we are not able to uſe the mercy well when we have it. If you

3.

you would ask gifts from God, it may be God sees, that enlarged gifts would make thee proud, and that thou wouldest be puffed up with them, and exalt thy self above thy brethren, therefore God will deny thee. We read, Gen. 26. 1, 2. *When there was a famine in the Land,* ——*He went to enquire of the Lord, whether he should go down into Ægypt, God answered, Go not down into Ægypt.* God would not let him go; but in the dayes of *Jacob* there was a famine in the Land, Gen. 46. 3. *and God said to Jacob, Go down into Ægypt.* Now what might be the reason, that God would have *Jacob* goe down into Ægypt, and not *Isaac*. The reason is this, *Isaac* was a man of weaker Graces then *Jacob* was; and God saw, that if *Isaac* had gone down into Ægypt for corne, he would have fallen into the sinnes of the Land. Now *Jacob* was a strong man in grace and in gifts; for as a Prince he wrastled with God, and prevailed, and was called, *Israel*. God saw that *Jacob* would resist their idolatrous wayes, and not be guilty of their sins. So you may ask mercies of God, and it may be you are not able to manage them well. And therefore God denies you; when as another askes the same mercy, and God gives it to him; because he sees he will use it well, and improve it to Gods glory. Therefore reflect upon thy self; and when God denies thee

Gen. 26. 1, 2.

Gen. 46. 3.

a mercy, which thou hast begged at his hands; Say to thy self, this denial is in mercy, for he did not think me fit for it. If men would take this way to consider of Gods dealing with them, it would silence all the murmurings and repinings of their hearts against God.

4. *Qui frigidè orat, docet negare.*

4. If you pray but cursorily and carelesly, then God may deny you. He that prayes coldly, doth, as it were, intreat God to give him a denial. God promiseth to be found, if we seek him with our whole heart: But if we be careless and regardless our selves, how can we expect that God should regard us?

So much for answer to that question, In what cases God may deny his peoples prayers. This is the second thing.

3. The third particular, is another Case of conscience. And it is this.

Quest. Denials of prayer, when in mercy?

Seeing God doth not hear the prayers of his people in some cases; How may we know, whether the denyal of our prayers be in mercy or no?

God doth not hear the prayers of wicked men, he denies them in wrath; but his peoples prayers he denies in mercy; and that is in these cases.

Answ. 1. 1. This is a mercy, in case any of his people ask any thing that is sinful in it self. God denies that to his people in mercy, which he gives to others in wrath. God will not alwaies give to his people what they

they pray for, but what is best for them. If God should give his people all they ask, they would be undone. It is mercy to deny a mad man a sword, for he would cut his own throat with it: To deny a child a knife, for he would cut his fingers with it. You have an instance in Peter, Luke 5. 8. *When Simon Peter saw him, he fell down at Jesus his knees, saying, Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.* Had Jesus Christ granted Peter his request, he had been undone for ever; Therefore he would not depart from him. So that this denial was in mercy. As on the other side, it is a demonstration of Gods wrath, many times, when God doth grant mercies to wicked men. So it was to Pharaoh, he desired that God would remove the plagues from him; God granted it, thereby to harden *Pharoahs* heart, and make him ripe for destruction. Luke 5. 8.

2. God denies in mercy, if that we ask would be an occasion of sinne. Suppose a man beg wealth; God sees the having of wealth would make him a proud man: Now the denial of that is a mercy to him. As in the forementioned instance, God would not let *Isaac* go down to Ægypt, because it would have been an occasion of sin to him. As he said very well, God denies that in love, which he grants in anger. God doth not hear many in their desires, 2.

Concedit iratus quod negat propitius; multi Deus non exaudit ad voluntatem, ut exaudiat ad salutem.

that he may hear them for their good.

3. God denies a prayer in mercy, when he gives a better in lieu of it; It was the desire of *Moses* that he might goe into the land of *Canaan*, but it was better to him to goe to the heavenly Canaan, and therefore God translated him thither. So the Apostles desired Christ to tell them, when he would restore the Kingdome to Israel. He would not resolve them that, yet he gave them a greater mercy, for he gave them the holy Ghost. So *David* desired the life of that childe that was illegitimate; but God tooke away the bastard (which would have been a living monument of *Davids* folly) and gave him a *Solomon*. God will either give us what we aske (saith *Bernard*) or what he knowes to be better for us.

Act 1.7,8.

Aut dabit Deus quod petimus, aut quod novit utilius.

4. God may deny to returne this request in mercy, to quicken our hearts and affections in prayer, and to make us more eager in the pursuit after mercy. God many times denies that mercy which thou beggest, not as though he would not heare thee, but to see how thy heart will be drawn out towards him in prayer, to make thee more vehement and importunate in thy desires. Thus God was angry with the prayers of his people, *Psal.* 80. 4. that they might be more fervent. God doth not delay to heare our prayers (saith *Anselme*)

Psal.80.4. Non differt Deus eo quod dare non vult sed ut auctio desiderio abundantius dare possit. Anselme.

Anselme) because he hath no minde to give, but that our desires may be kindled, and so he may take occasion to give more plentifully.

5. God may deny a thing in mercy, if thou didst too eagerly desire the mercy, and too affectionately set thine heart upon it; if thou lovest it too much in the expetition, thou wilt be excessive in the fruition: *Rachell* had better wanted Children, which she so impetuously delired; for she had a childe and died in childe-bed. God turnes mercies too passionately desired into curses, and snares to us, or else takes them away from us. And so I have answered this second Question. And that is the third and last particular; I come now to application.

Use 1. Consider this, oh all you wicked and ungodly men; Consider how far you are from having your prayers heard; What? will not a father heare his childe, when he prayes to him coldly and remissely, and will he heare a slave? If God will not heare the remisse prayer of a godly man, dost thou thinke he will heare the prayers of a wicked man? If God will not heare his peoples prayers at all times, notwithstanding they are in a state of friendship, will God heare thy prayers, oh wicked man, that art in state of enmity against him? If God will not heare

Use 1.

the prayers of his own people, which are ſometimes his delight, doſt thou thinke he will heare thy prayers, which are alwayes an abomination to him?

2. 2. This ſhould put an holy awe upon the hearts of all godly men; what though you are in a ſtate of favour with God, though this will carrie your ſoules to heaven, yet this will not bring you a return of your prayers. You muſt have your hearts rightly qualifyed, before God will give a returne of thy prayers. And thus much for the ſecond doctrine, and alſo for the negative condition.

I come now to the condition poſitive, to which, returnes of prayer are annexed; *Though he will not riſe and give him, becauſe he is his friend; yet becauſe of his importunity, he will riſe and give him as many as he needs.* From which part of the text you may obſerve this doctrine.

Doct. 3. *That the people of God muſt not content themſelves with being in a ſtate of favour, and friendſhip with God, but they muſt alſo labour after this holy importunity in prayer, before they can have their prayer accepted.*

In the handling of this doctrine, I ſhall proceed in this method.

[1. 1. I ſhall anſwer an objection that ſtands in the way.

2. 2. I ſhall ſhew what this importunity is.

3. 3. At what times God works this in his people.

4. Wherein

4. Wherein lies the difference between an holy importunity, and a naturall importunity.

5. What are the reasons, why the people of God must have this importunity in prayer.

6. How comes it to passe that so many want this holy importunity in their prayers?

7. What helps may be used to attaine this fervencie and importunity of spirit. And then I shall apply it by way of Caution.

Obje: 1. 1. I must answer an objection which is this, *It may be some will say, what need is there that this condition should be so much pressed, what need is there of importunity in prayer? Hath not God decreed what mercy to bestow upon me? if so, then I am sure I shall have those mercies, let me pray how I will; and on the contrary, if God hath not decreed to give me such a mercy, I shall not have them, let me pray never so well; for the decree of God is effectuall, irresistable, and cannot be altered; All mine importunity cannot alter the decree of God.*

Sol. For answer to this, I shall propound three things to your consideration.

1. 1. We have not to doe to search into the secret will of God, we are to minde the revealed will of God, and not the secret; It concernes not us to know what God

God will doe, but what God would have us to doe. Deut. 29. 29. *Secret things belong to God, but revealed things to us, and to our Children*; we know not any thing of the decree and counsell of God, but onely as he is pleased to reveale it.

Deut. 29.

Though God can give a mercy without prayer, yet he hath not any where promised to give it without prayer. Prayer is the meanes that God hath appointed us to use for the obtaining of mercy.

3. The decree of God must not make us to be remisse in prayer; for God hath decreed not onely the end, but also the meanes; as God hath decreed to give thee mercy, so he hath also decreed that thou shouldest pray for it. And therefore wheresoever the decree or purpose of God is mentioned, it is used as an argument, to stirre up the people of God to prayer. *For thou oh Lord of hosts, God of Israel, hast revealed to thy servant saying, I will build thee an house, therefore hath thy servant found in his heart to pray this prayer unto thee. And now oh Lord God, thou art God, that God and thy words be true, and thou hast promised this goodnesse unto thy servant. Therefore now let it please thee to blesse the house of thy servant, that it may continue for ever before thee: For thou oh Lord God hast spoken it, and with thy blessing let the house of thy servant be blessed for ever.* You see here God had purposed, and promised

2 Sam. 27, 28, 29.

promiſed to bleſſe the houſe of *David*, and to continue it for ever; doth this make *David* remiſſe in prayer? doth *David* argue, what need I pray for this mercy, ſeeing God is reſolved to give it? No, *David* takes this hint, and uſeth it to good purpoſe in his prayer. Another inſtance you have in *Iſaac*. God had decreed, and promiſed that the ſeed of *Abraham* ſhould be multiplyed as the ſtarres of the heaven, *Gen.* 15. 5. and that this promiſed ſhould be accompliſhed in *Iſaac*. Did this make *Iſaac* neglect prayer? No, for we read *Gen.* 25. 21. *Iſaac intreated the Lord for his wife, becauſe ſhe was barren, and the Lord was intreated of him, &c.* Though God had promiſed, that in *Iſaac* all the nations of the earth ſhould be bleſſed, yet *Iſaac* betakes himſelfe to prayer to God, for the accompliſhment of that mercy, that was decreed and promiſed.

Gen. 15. 5.

Gen. 25. 21.

But you will ſay, ſuppoſe God hath decreed he will not give me the mercy I pray for, what benefit is it for me to pray for it? Object.

I anſwer. 1. It is more then any man doth know, that God hath decreed he will denie thee the mercy thou askeſt, Sol.

2. If it be ſo that God hath decreed not to give thee the mercy thou prayeſt for, yet God will give thee the returne of prayer into thy boſome; though it may be he will not give thee the particular thing

thing thou desirest. And thus I have dispatcht the first thing, I have answered the objection.

Quest. What is holy importunity. *Answ.* διὰ τὴν ἀναίδειαν.

The second particular is this, *What is this holy importunity?*

I answer in generall, The word in the originall signifies impudence, or want of shame. It is a metaphor taken from beggars, who are impudently importunate, and take no denyall; if you deny them once, they will aske you again, and again, and never leave till they get what they desire. It is a gathering together of all the affections of the soule, a stirring them all up in prayer, whereby the soule is so earnestly desirous after the good it wants, that it will not rest, nor leave off the duty, untill he doe finde some returne.

Rom. 12. 12. προσκαρτερεῖτε. This is ment *Rom.* 12. 12. *Continuing instant in prayer.* The Originall word is very emphaticall; It notes not onely to persevere, but to persevere and continue with utmost strength, to ingage all a mans possibility in the worke. It notes instancy and importunity; It is a phrase borrowed from dogs, that when they are hunting, will not cease following the game till they have got it: So a godly man will pursue God in duty, and never leave till he finde the mercy he begs from him.

Gen. 32. 26. Thus did holy *Jacob Gen.* 32. 26. *God said, Let me go, for the day breaketh: And he said, I will*

will not let thee goe unleſſe thou bleſſe me. So it is ſaid of *Elias*, *James* 5. 17. *He prayed earneſtly.* In the Greeke, it is in praying, he prayed; to ſhew that a Chriſtian, when he is praying ſhould yet pray, ſhould pray more earneſtly, he ſhould be as it were in agony in prayer; It was ſaid of *Auſtin* in his preaching, that he never left preaching, till he found he had done ſome good upon the hearts of his hearers. So muſt you pray, and continue praying, and doe not give over, till you finde ſome good done upon your hearts, till you finde ſin weakned, and graces ſtrengthned; This is the holy importunitie that is here ſpoken of. And ſo much for the ſecond particular.

James 5. 17. προσευχῇ προσηυξατο.

The third particular is this. *When doth the Lord worke in the hearts of his people this holy importunity, what ſeaſons are they wherein the people of God are moſt importunate?*

Queſt. When are Gods people moſt importunate?

I anſwer. 1. God workes this holy importunity in the hearts of his people at their firſt converſion, then is the time when they are moſt earneſt after God in duties. *Auſtin* tells us it was ſo in his time. firſt, Converts were moſt fervent, and affectionate towards God in duty, when they were firſt brought from the ſtate of nature into the ſtate of grace. At the firſt taſte of the excellency of grace they are much raviſhed with it, becauſe of

Anſw. 1.

Plurimi novitate converſionis ferventes erant.

of the newnesse of the conditions; New things doe most affect men.

2. 2. There is the most holy importunity in a man, when he lives under the cleerest apprehension, and assurance of Gods love in Christ. Psal. 42. 4. *When I remembred these things, I poure out my soule in me:* when he remembered, and considered the marks and tokens of Gods grace in him, and love to him, this made him importunate. A Christian may be compared to a Marigold, which while the Sun shines upon it, opens it selfe, but afterwards shuts. Christians, when the Sun of Gods favour shines upon them, their soules are inlarged, their affections inflamed towards God; but when God hides his face, they are troubled, their hearts are straitned, and they cannot pray as they used to doe. It is said of the Nightingale, that when she thinks any one is neere, she sings more sweetly then when she is alone in the wood. The soule, when it sees that God is neare it, and that his favour is towards it, then it sings most sweetly, then it prayes most fervently; but when the love of God is clouded, and the soule left as it were alone; then the affections flag, and grow remisse in prayer.

3. 3. Another time when the people of God are importunate, is, when the time for the accomplishment of a promise

grow

growes neer. This we find in *Daniel*, *When he understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the Prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolation of Jerusalem.* Then he set his face *to seek the Lord by prayer and supplication.* *Daniel* prayed at other times, but then he was most importunate, when the promise was neer the accomplishment, then he was most fervent. To the same purpose is that Jer. 29. 13. *Then shall you call upon me, and ye shall seek for me and finde me, when ye shall search for me with all your hearts.* During the seventy years, the Jews did not expresse any holy importunity towards God, which is the reason of that expression you read, *Dan.* 9. 13. *Though all this evil is come upon us, yet made we not our prayer before the Lord our God,* &c. But when the seventy years were come neer to an end, the Jews prayed more the last year, then they did all the seventy years before. Therefore said God, *I know my thoughts that I have towards you, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you an expected end. Then shall ye call upon me, and shall go and pray unto me, and I will harken unto you.* Therefore when you see mercies for a Family, or a Nation wanting, if thine heart be indifferent, that thou dost not care whether thou prayest or not, then you may conclude, that mercy will be long before it comes. But if you finde that God drawes

Dan. 9. 2, 3.

Jer. 29. 13.

Dan. 9. 13.

Jer. 29. 11, 12.

drawes out thine heart for mercy, if God stirre up thy desires, and work this holy importunity in thine heart, it is an argument that mercy is neer; for when prayer is in thine heart, mercy is at the door.

4. Another time when the people of God are most importunate in prayer, is, when they are most drawn off from the world, when they are most free from worldly distractions. The same word in the Hebrew, signifies both meditation and prayer; to shew, that when the heart hath been drawn off from the world by meditation, then it is in a fit posture for prayer.

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5. Another time, is when they walk most closely with God. He that lives carelessly, will not pray importunately. Therefore *Job* saith, *If iniquity be in thine hands, put it away, so shalt thou lift up thine heart*, &c. to note, that iniquity entertained and countenanced in the soul, is the great hinderer of the lifting up of the heart; the great cooler of importunity.

Job 11. 13.

6. Another time is, in deep and bitter afflictions, then the people of God are most importunate in their prayers, Psal. 130. 1, 2. *Out of the deeps have I cryed unto thee, Lord hear the voice of my supplication.* So Psal. 142. 1, 2. *I cryed unto the Lord with my voice,—— I poured out my complaint before him; I shewed before him my trouble.* So it is said of the

Psal. 130. 1, 2.

Psal. 142. 1, 2.

Jews,

Jews, Psal. 107. 6. *They cryed unto the Lord in their trouble,*— And the same words are repeated, vers. 13, 19, 28. When trouble and great distress was upon the Jews, by *Sennacherib*, it is said, *For this cause Hezekiah the King, and the Prophet Isaiah, the son of Amos, prayed, and cryed to heaven.* So it is said of *Manasseh*, *When he was in affliction, he besought the Lord his God, and humbled himself greatly,— and prayed unto him, &c.* So said that good woman, 1 Sam. 1. 15. *I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit, and have poured out my soul before the Lord.* Thus it was with the whole Church, Isai. 26. 9. *With my soul have I desired thee in the night: yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early: for when thy judgements are abroad, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousnesse.* And that is the last season, wherein the people of God use to be importunate with God in prayer.

Psal. 107. 6.

2 Chron. 32. 20.

2 Chron. 33. 12, 13.

1 Sam. 1. 15.

Isai. 26. 9.

And so much for the third thing.

LUKE 11.8.

Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend: yet because of his importunity, he will, &c.

III. SERMON.

Difference between holy and naturall importunity, in 7. things.

THE fourth particular is this; wherein lyes the difference betwixt that holy importunity, in the hearts of Gods people, and the seeming importunity which flowes from the gifts of nature.

Answ. It lyes in these seven things.

1.

1. An holy importunity, makes a man restlesse till his prayers be heard, Psal. 143. 6, 7. ——*I stretch forth mine hands unto thee. My soul thirsteth after thee, as a thirsty land; hear me speedily, my spirit failes; hide not thy face from me, lest I be like them that go down into the pit.* As a thirsty land. A thirsty land is never satisfied, till it gets rain. So Psal. 119. 20. *My soul breaks for the longing it hath*—— Psal. 42. 1. *As the Hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God.* The Hart never rests, never gives over running, till it come to

Psal. 143. 6, 7.

Psal 119. 20.

Psal 42. 1.

to the water. Such is the importunity of a godly man, he is never quiet, never satisfied till his prayers be returned into his bosom. But it is otherwise with an hypocrite, he prayes for mercy, for pardon of sinne, but he can rest contented, though God doth not hear him; he can beg grace, but he can be very well satisfied without grace, Prov. 13.4. *The soul of the sluggard desires and hath nothing, but the soul of the diligent maketh fat.* Prov. 13.4.

2. An holy importunity is known by this, That it makes a man more earnest for spiritual, then temporal mercies. This hath been the temper of Gods people, Psal. 4.6. *There be many that say, Who will shew us any good; but Lord lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us.* Observe the difference, between *Davids* and wicked mens tempers: Their great question and desire was, Who would shew them any good, any temporal good; Who would give them the increase of corne and wine: But *Davids* heart breathed after other things, after Gods favour, and the light of his countenance. So Psal. 143.6,7,8. *I stretch forth mine hands unto thee, ——my soul thirsteth after thee——* Psal. 63.1. *O God, thou art my God, early will I seek thee; my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is.* David was in a wilderness, he wanted water: One would have

2. Psal. 4.6. Psal. 143.6,7,8. Psal. 63.1.

thought he should have sought God for water; But you see *Davids* desires runne in another channel; he thirsted more for God then for water; he more desired spiritual advantages, then temporal enjoyments. This importunity, makes a man more to endeavour against sin then affliction; more to desire saving grace, then common mercies. But now the heart of an hypocrite, is more desirous of temporal then spiritual mercies. You read in Hosea 7. 14. *They have not cryed unto me with their heart, when they howled upon their beds; they assemble themselves for corn and wine, and they rebel against me.* They howled, for what? Was it for grace and spiritual blessings? No, it was for corn, and wine and oyl; not for grace, not for acquaintance with God. Another instance you have, Acts 8. *Simon Magus* offered money to purchase the Holy Ghost. What was his end in desiring the Holy Ghost? Was it to obtain a spiritual mercy? No, but it was that he might work miracles. And further, when *Peter* put him upon the begging of a spiritual mercy, vers. 22. —— *pray God, if perhaps the thoughts of thine heart may be forgiven thee.* But *Simon Magus* followed not *Peters* rule, he had no great desire of the pardon of sin, or any spirituall mercy; but he prayes, That none of those things, which *Peter* had spoken might come upon him, vers. 24. That is, that his money

Hos. 7. 14.

Act. 8.

ney might not perish, nor he perish with it, that his gifts might not perish; this was his great request and desire.

3. An holy importunity of Gods people, is more in sensibleness of the inward affections of the heart, then in the outward expressions of words, Psal. 38. 9. *All my desire is before thee, and my groanings are not hid from thee.* *Davids* heart panted and failed him, vers. 10. but not a word of expressions, though his expressions were very good. Rom. 8. 26. *The spirit helps our infirmities, with sighs and groans that cannot be uttered.* It is said, Revel. 5. 8. *The four and twenty Elders had golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of the Saints.* They are called odours for their sweetnesse, golden, for their excellency, and vials, which are vessels of large extent in the belly, but narrow mouthed. The hearts of Gods people are like vials, many times, inlarged within, when they are straitned in their words and expressions. There are many times, most dilated desires in the hearts of the Saints, and yet they are so narrow mouthed, that they are not able to utter. But now it is otherwise with hypocrites, they have more in the expression then in the action. It was Gods complaint against the Jews of old, *They draw nigh to God with their lips, when their hearts were far from him.* An hypocrite indeed performes duty, but his duties never

3. Psal. 38. 9. Rom. 8. 26. Rev. 5. 8. Isai. 29. 13.

reach to his heart: They are like a pot, that is hot at the top, but cold at the bottom.

4. 4. An holy importunity, makes a man more inlarged before God in secret, then before men in publike. Cant. 2.14. *O my Dove that art in the clifts of the rock, in the secret places of thy stairs; let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice, for sweet is thy voyce, and thy countenance is comely.* The voice of Christs Church is sweet, even then when she is in secret, when none but God beholds her, Cant. 8.13. *Thou that dwellest in the gardens, the companions harken to thy voice; cause me to hear it.* But now an hypocrite, doth never care to have any secret communion with God; he cares not to pray alone; and if hee bee brought to that, hee takes no care of his heart, he curbs not his thoughts; all his care is in company, popular applause, and vain-glory, is as the wind to the sails of a Ship, that makes their affections move the faster. An hypocrite, in this regard, may be resembled to a Nightingale, which sings sweetest when any man stands neer her. So carnal men, when others are witnesses of their actions, then they put forth the utmost of their ability. They are of *Jehu's* temper, he was zealous onely upon that condition, that others would see it.

5. 5. This holy importunity, makes a godly man the more humble, the more enlarged

larged he is to prayer: The reason is, because he looks upon his enlargements, not as coming from the strength of his natural parts or abilities, but as the free-gift, and gracious dispensation of Gods Spirit: and so he sees he hath nothing whereof to boast; and so it makes him low in his own eyes. You know a violet, that is one of the sweetest flowers, growes lowest in the earth. The fullest ears of corn, do most hang down: The fullest barrels, make the least noise: So the most gracious heart, is the most low and vile in its own apprehensions, is the neerest earth, but dust and ashes. The fuller he is of divine discoveries, or enlargement, the less boasting doth he make in the world. A ship, the heavier it is laden, the lesse it is tost with winds and waves; the more empty it is, the more it is lifted up above the water. so a man, the more empty, the more tost too and fro with every wind of applause. Grace is, as it were, the balast of the soul, to keep down a mans spirits, and make him humble in the midst of wit and parts. *Be ye therefore sober and watch unto prayer.* Be sober and not puffed up, do not boast of your enlargements. Though it is true, it doth refer to another thing, yet *Byfield* refers it to prayer; and he saith, That man that prayes to God, with most enlargednesse of affections towards God, that man cannot but he must watch and be

1 Pet. 4. 7.

ſober. Sobriety is oppoſed to pride, for a man may be dumb with his own gifts and graces; and watchfulneſſe is oppoſed to remiſneſſe, and deadneſſe, and careleſneſſe of ſpirit in the performance of duties. Thus it is with a ſincere man, that hath this true importunity in him. But now wicked men, if ever they have enlargements in duty, it puffs them up. It is with them, as it was with, *Uzziah* 2 Chr. 26. 16. When God had helped him marvellouſly, til he was ſtrong. *But when he was ſtrong, his heart was lifted up to his deſtruction.* When God helps the ſoul of ſuch a man in duty, it makes him to lift up himſelf againſt God, and be puffed up above his brethren.

6. 6. He that hath this holy importunity in him, his deſires are rather quickned, then abated by denials. You finde this in the woman of Canaan, Matt. 15. 22. She cryed unto Christ, ſaying, *Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David, my daughter is grievouſly vexed with a divel:* Jeſus Chriſt takes no notice of her; *He anſwered her not a word*, verſ. 23. There is one diſcouragement. One would have thought ſhe would have deſiſted; but ſhe prayed again, and *the Diſciples beſought him to ſend her away*, verſ. 23. There was another diſcouragement, which would have knocked off the deſires of many; but ſhe continues her requeſt ſtill. Jeſus Chriſt himſelf anſwers her, *I am not*

Mar. 15. 22.

ſent

sent, but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, vers. 24. There is a third discouragement; and yet this doth not cool her affections, but she comes afresh upon Christ, she came and worshipped, saying, *Lord, help me*, vers. 25. Yet she found another repulse, and that worse then any of the former; *It is not meet to take the childrens bread, and give it to doggs*, vers. 26. Christ you see calls her a dog; and yet all this doth not cast her off, but she takes encouragement, even from this discouraging answer: *And she said, Truth Lord, yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters table*, vers. 27. She was resolved she would not give over, till she got what she came for, till Christ had said, *O woman great is thy faith, be it unto thee even as thou wilt*, vers. 28. Denials are to the Saints, as water to the Smiths-forge, when it is sprinkled upon it, it is so far from cooling or quenching it, that it makes it burn with the greater heat: So the denials, and discouragements Gods people meet with, they serve for bellowes, to blow up those sparks that are in them into a flame, to make their desires stronger, their affections to burn the hotter. But now to an hypocrite, denials and discouragements, do take off the wheels of his affections, and make them to move slowly and heavily: Job 21. 15. *What is the Almighty that we should serve him, and what profit should we have if*

Job. 21. 15.

if we pray unto him? We get no good by it, the mercies we ask, are not yet in our hands. Now this argues a sinful impatiency, and a want of holy importunity.

7. 7. Holy importunity is kindled in the heart, by the motions and operations of Gal.4.6. Gods blessed Spirit, Gal.4.6. *Because you are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Sonne into your hearts, crying, Abba father.* In the time of the law, those sacrifices that were accepted were burnt with fire from heaven, Levit. 9. 24. *There came fire out from before the Lord, and consumed upon the altar the burnt-offering*——— And so in *Elijahs* time, 1 King. 18. 38. When *Elijah* had laid his sacrifice upon the altar of the Lord, *Then the fire of the Lord, fell and consumed the burnt-sacrifice and the wood*———So the Heathens vestal-flames were kindled with sun-beams. The true importunity is from above, it is a fire kindled, by God himself, in the hearts of his people. But there is another importunity, that comes from natural principles, from natural abilities, a strong memory, a profound judgement, a ready wit, a fluent tongue; and these are very advantagious to the duty. There is the gift of prayer, as well as the grace of prayer. Some are importunate in prayer, out of fleshly respects. Now this is but a counterfeit importunity. And thus much for the fourth particular, the difference between holy and natural importunity. LUK.

Levit.9. 24.

1 King.18. 38.

LUKE 11. 8.

—Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give—

HIII. SERMON.

He fift particular is this. *What are the reasons why Gods people must labour for this holy importunity in their prayers?* 5th. Particular. Why we must be importunate.

I answer. 1. Because God hath tied and promised returnes, not to the persons praying, but to the qualifications of their prayers. And when the Scripture makes mention of this duty of prayer, it doth also make mention of severall concomitants, that must goe along with it, to make it acceptable. To instance, there are diverse concomitants which the Scripture holds forth to be necessary, for the acceptance of our prayers. *Reas.* 1. Concomitants of prayer.

1. We must pray believingly, *Heb.* 11. 6. *He* Heb. 11. 6.

6. *He that cometh to God must beleeve.* Mar. 11. 24. *Therefore I say unto you (saith Christ) what things soever yee desire, when ye pray, beleeve that yee receive them and yee shall have them.* He doth not say; pray how you will, you shall have them; but pray in such and such manner, pray beleevingly, and then you shall receive; very much to this purpose is 1 *James* 5. *If any man want wisdome, let him ask it of God.*——

Mar. 11. 24.

Jam. 1. 5.

Ver. 6. *Ver. 6. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering, for he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the winde and tossed.* So that you see God lookes to the manner, as well as to the matter of a performance.

2. You must pray regularly, according to the will of God.

3. Dependingly, resting upon Christs intercession.

4. Waitingly.

5. Preparedly; but these I shall passe by, because they doe not so properly concerne the Point in hand.

6. We are commanded to pray earnestly, and fervently, and importunately; So *David* did, *Psal.* 55. 17. *I will pray and cry aloud, and he shall heare my voyce.* A full place to this purpose is *Rom.* 15. 30. *Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christs sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that yee strive together with me in your prayers to God for mee.* The word in the Greek is ve-

Psal. 55. 17.

Rom. 15. 30. συναγωνίζεσθαι. *Mecum certare.*

ry emphatically, it is the same word that is applyed to Christ, when he was in an agony, when he sweat drops of blood. He beseecheth them to contend and strive in their prayers; we are to be as it were in an agony, when we are in prayer. Prayer is not a little booke labour, it is not a lip labour onely, but it is a raising up and putting forth the heart and affections in the worke. So *Rom.* 12. 12. *Bee continuing instant in prayer.* It is a metaphor taken from dogs. A dog of all creatures is the best able to endure hunger, he will run from place to place, and never leave till he hath got his prey: so you are to hunger after God, and after mercy, and not to rest satisfied, till God doth grant the mercy you stand in need of, pray, and pray, and pray againe, and fight till you overcome, pray till you get an answer. Another place is, *Jam.* 5. 16. *The effectuall fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.* The word in the originall is significant. Some expound it a working prayer; It may be interpreted a prayer well wrought in the heart, and so a prayer that comes from the heart,——A prayer wrought in us by the Spirit, and carried on by faith. Another place to the same purpose is, *Acts* 26. 7. *Unto which promise our twelve Tribes instantly serving God*——The word is rendered by some, continually, daily, constantly,

Rom. 12. 12. τῇ προσευχῇ προσκαρτερεῖτε.

James 5. 16. Πολλὴ ἐνεργουμένη.

Acts 26. 7. ἐν ἐκτενείᾳ

stantly, but it signifies most properly a serving of God, with the utmost of ones strength, to be as a man upon a rack, to use the very all of their power; or it may be it is borrowed from one that runs a race, wherein men stretch out their limbs to the utmost. The word is the same here that is used *Acts* 12. 5. *Prayer was made without ceasing*, or (as it is in the margin of your booke, and more agreeably to the Originall) *instant and earnest prayer was made for Peter.* The prayers of Gods people were so earnest, that they opened the prison doores for him. So *Colos.* 4. 12. *Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, alwayes labouring fervently for you in prayers.* ——— So that you see it is not every prayer that God is satisfied with, no nor Gods people neither, it is not every prayer that shall prevaile with God. There must be importunity in it. So much for the first reason.

Acts 12 5. προσωχὴ ἐκτενὴς.

Colos. 4. 12. ἀγωνιζόμενος.

Reas. 2. 2. We must have this holy importunitie in prayer, because there is much strength and importunity against thee, when ever thou goest upon thy knees. There is strength against you both from without, and from within.

1. 1. From without; There are the powers of darknesse that stand against you, and resist you. As it was with *Abraham*, *Gen.* 15. 11. When *Abraham* was sacrificing, fowles

Gen. 15. 11.

fowles came downe upon the ſacrifice, but *Abraham drove them away. Deodate* ſaith, this is a ſigne that the Devills, thoſe infernall ſpirits labour to diſturbe us in holy duties; as the good Angels behold us in our aſſemblies, and rejoyce to ſee our order, ſo the wicked Angells labour to diſturbe us and moleſt us.

2. There is ſtrength againſt us from within. There is that in thy heart that will carry thee more violently from God, then the good motions in thee can bring thee to God, there is a forcible withdrawing of the heart from God. *James* 1. 14. *Every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own luſt and enticed.* When you have no will to doe good, even then you have a will to doe evill; nay there are wills of the fleſh, and luſts of the fleſh, ſhall we not have halfe a will for God, when we have many wills for ſin? You ſee therefore it is not without good reaſon that we ſhould be thus importunate in prayer. And ſo much for the fifth particular.

2.

James 1. 14.

θελήματα σαρκὸς ἐπιθυμίας σαρκός.

The ſixt particular is this. *What are the reaſons why ſo many people doe want this holy importunity, that ſo many pray, and ſo few pray with that earneſtneſſe and eagerneſſe of heart, and affection that is required?*

Queſt. Why ſo few importunate in prayer?

I anſwer, that comes to paſſe for many reaſons.

1. This comes to paſſe from the injections,

Reaſ. 1.

jections, and instigations of Satan. The Devill acts not onely powerfully, but also subtilly and craftily, he will endeavour to divert you from the performance of duty, he will perswade you to neglect it if he can; But it may be thou wilt say, thou wilt direct thy prayer unto God, and thou wilt have thine eye fixed upon God. Why now Sathan will fall in with you, he will jogge your arme, he will take off your eye from the marke, that you shall not be able to hit it. Thus he dealt with *Abraham*, as you heard before. Thus he dealt, *Job* 1. 6. *Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Sathan came also among them.* I am not ignorant that many Interpreters, by the sons of God, doe understand the Angells, because the Angells are called the sons of God, *Job* 38. 7. but it cannot be so taken here; I will give but one reason to prove it; because the place where the Angells are, is in heaven, and if so, then the Devill must be in heaven, which is by all denyed; he never was in heaven, since he was cast out of it. And therefore *Bolducius* saith, that this day was the Lords day, and by the Sons of God are meant, the godly men, that lived in the time, and place where *Job* lived, the posterity of *Seth*. And you shall finde in Scripture this very appella-

Job 1. 6.

Job 38. 7.

tion

tion given to them. *Gen. 6. 2. The sons of God saw the daughters of men.* These sons of God must needs be men, and not Angells; And so they are to be understood in this place in *Job*, the people of God met together, and came before the Lord, and Sathan came also among them, he came to hinder them and disturbe them. So it was *Zach.* 3. 1, 2. *And he shewed me Joshua the high Priest standing before the Angell of the Lord, and Sathan standing at his right hand to resist him; And the Lord said unto Sathan, The Lord rebuke thee O Sathan, even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a firebrand pluckd out of the fire?* You see how Sathan laboured to divert the thoughts, and distract the heart of the high Priest in the performance of religious duties. That is the first reason. Gen. 6. 2. Zach. 3. 1, 2.

2. This importunity is wanting in our prayers, when we know and allow our selves in any one sin, and let it lie upon our hearts unrepented of. *Hildersham* gathers from the 51. *Psalme*, that all the while that *David* did lie in that sin of adulterie, all the time that sin was unrepented of, the heart of David was shut up that he could not pray, as he was wont to doe before, and as he did after he had repented of that sin, at which time he writ that penitentiall Psalme. You had

need looke to your hearts, that there doe not lie there any sin incouraged, and unrepented of; for be sure of this, if thy prayer doe not make thee leave sinning, thy sin will make thee leave praying. That is the second reason of the want of importunity.

3. 3. Another reason is this, because many take unfit seasons for the performance of dutie. It is the judgement of that learned and reverend man of God, *Mr Bolton*, that the taking of unfit seasons for the performance of prayer, doth more obstruct, and hinder this holy importunity in prayer, then all the suggestions and instigations of Sathan.

Now there are three unfit seasons for the performance of this duty.

1. 1. When the body is sleepy, and fit for nothing but to take its rest. A sleepy and sluggish temper, is a canker to eat out many sweet affections, Cant. 3. 1. *By night upon my bed I sought him, but I found him not.* Some Interpreters take occasion hence, to speak against late prayers. Cant. 3. 1.

2. 2. Another unfit season is, when the heart is filled with worldly care and distractions, and the incumbrances of this present life; many men are guilty of this, they will so clog themselves with the cares of this life, that they cannot have a praying time free from them. Some men will be

be down upon their knees, before the things of this world are out of their minds; and so they have no time to consider, or meditate, or to put the heart into a fit frame for that work. You know we are *to attend upon the Lord without distraction*, 1 Cor. 7. 35. It was the fault of those Jews in hearing, that when they came to hear the word, *their hearts did go out after their covetousnesse*, Ezek. 33. 31. That is another season unfit for prayer. 1 Cor. 7. 35. Ezek. 33. 31.

3. Another season is, when we are under passionate distempers. When tumultuous passions are up, holy affections are down, 1 Tim. 2. 8. *I will that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting*; to shew, that where there is wrath, the duty of prayer cannot be performed in an acceptable manner. And of the same mind was the Apostle *Peter*; who therefore gives this counsel, 1 Pet. 3. 7. *Likewise, ye husbands, dwel with them according to knowledg, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers be not hindered.* The Apostle wisely fore-saw, that if man and wife lived in discontent and trouble, then their prayers would be hindred; and therefore he adviseth them, to prevent the hinderance of their prayers, by avoiding occasions of discontent. And that is the third season, wherein people are are unfit 3. 1 Tim. 2. 8. 1 Pet. 3. 7.

for prayer: so they are diverted from that fervency, and importunity they might have in their prayers. We should therefore chuse the fittest seasons for prayer. It is said of *Luther*, by *Vitus Theodorus*, who was present with him at *Coburge*, and many times heard him at his private prayers, in a letter of his to *Melanchthon*, That there was no day passed over his head, wherein *Luther* did not spend three hours, at the least, in prayers; and those (not hours that he could best spare, unseasonable hours, but) such hours as were the fittest for his study. And that was a reason, that *Luther* was very importunate in his prayers, as the same Author informs us; Good God, with how much reverence did I hear him pray! With how much boldnesse and confidence, &c. And on the contrary, one reason why men have so little of this holy importunity, is for want of taking fit seasons for the work.

4. 4. Another reason of the want of this holy importunity is, the disuse and neglect of prayer in your Christian course. Many there are, that pray sometimes, and leave off praying again; now this doth very much dull mens affections in prayer. There is a Proverb, *Use makes perfectness*; I am sure it is so in the duty of prayer; let a Christian pray often, and he will come to pray well, and to pray with much enlargednesse of heart;

heart; and let him leave off prayer, and he will finde his heart exceedingly streightned. Take a Key, if you use it frequently, it will be bright, but if you lay it aside, it will soon grow rusty; thus will it be with a mans heart, use prayer much, keep it close to the performance of duty, it is the way to have thy heart bright. Let this Key of prayer, which doth open heaven, be used, it will be kept bright, and thy prayer will enter into heaven; but let this Key of prayer be laid aside, and do not thou often use it, and it will quickly grow rusty again; thy prayers and performances, will not be able to enter heaven, and thou wilt not be able to perform duty in that manner that God expecteth. If thou dost not watch unto prayer, with all carefulnesse, thou wilt loose thy zeal and fervent affection, and thy holy desires after God in duty. As it is with a Pump, use it every day, and water will come, but if you forbear the use of it two or three dayes, water will neither come so easily, nor so plentifully. If you do not pump out your holy desires every day, they will quickly flag and grow remisse. Physitians observe, concerning the teeth, that that side of the teeth that is not used, is most subject to rheumes and distillations. That heart that is not inured to prayer and holy duties, is most subject to Satans instillations and suggestions. This

is the fourth reason.

Reas. 5. The fifth reason why this importunity is wanting, is this, because men tye themselves to prescript forms of prayer. I do not say, that it is unlawful to use set forms of prayer; we finde that Jesus Christ himself used a form, Matt. 26. 39. Christ went and said, *Father if it be possible, let this cup pass from me.* Vers. 42. *He went again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not passe from me, thy will be done.* Vers. 44. *He went away again, and prayed, saying the same words.* To shew, that it is lawful to use set forms of prayer, but not alwaies. You are to strive for the spirit of prayer. A man that will use his crutches constantly, shall go lame all the dayes of his life. You live in an age, wherein Religion is much professed, and the Gospel is fully made known. Do not content your selves with forms; labour for the spirit of prayer, whereby you may go to God, and spread before him your wants and necessities, and beg those mercies, that are most sutable to your wants and exigences. Forms indeed will teach you to beg pardon for sin, in general; but you must beg pardon for particular sins. You must not onely beg mercy in general, but you must also beg those particular mercies, that are most sutable to you. And this, set forms are defective in, which yet is the main work in prayer.

Matt 26. 39.

prayer. He that tyes himself alwaies to another mans form, will not be able to pray alone, but weakly, and coldly, and formally. This is the fifth reason.

6. Another ground of this importunity, is a giving way to an accustomed continuance in a sleight and careless performance of duties; this enervates the affections, and emasculates the spirits; what men are accustomed to, that they get an habit of, so that they cannot do the contrary. As a Carriers horse, that is used to a dull and slow pace, cannot go out of it. The lessening of Acts, makes Habits more remisse. That is the last reason. And so much shall suffice for answer to the sixth Question. 6.

LUKE 11. 8.

Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend,
V. SERMON. *yet because of his importunity, he will give unto him, &c.*

THE Fourth particular is this; By wat helps may a man attain to this holy importunity in prayer.

For answer, I shall lay down six or seven Theological helps, by which a man may come to attain this holy importunity.

I. 1. Possesse thine heart with an awful fear of the Almighty God. This was the ground of *Davids* importunity, as you may see, Psal. 5. vers. 3. he saith, *My voice shalt thou hear in the morning*—— And in the 7 verse, you will finde this holy fear did lye at the bottom; *But as for me, I will come into thine house, in the multitude of thy mercy; and in thy fear, will I worship towards thine holy temple.* David came to duty, with a strong impression of Gods greatness and dreadfulness,

Psal. 5. 3.

neſs. So it is the advice of the Apoſtle, that if we would ſerve God acceptably, we muſt do it *with reverence and godly fear*, Heb. 12. 28. That fore-cited Author, *Vitus Theodorus* writes, concerning *Luther*, That he prayed with ſo much confidence, as if he had been ſpeaking with his friend and familiar; and yet with ſo much reverence, as one that conſidered the great diſtance between God and him. I may allude to that place, Iſai. 60. 5. though the words are ſpoken to another purpoſe; *Thy heart ſhall fear, and be enlarged.* An holy fear, breeds an holy care. If a man once comes to this, that he is fearleſſe of God, he will quickly be careleſſe in prayer; Job 15. 4. *Yea, thou caſteſt off fear, and reſtraineſt prayer before God.* A man that doth caſt off the fear of God, doth ſoon ceaſe to pray unto God: He that fears God moſt, that man will certainly pray to God beſt. That is the firſt help.

Tanta fiducia ut cum amico, tanta reverentiâ ut cum Deo.

Job. 15. 4.

2. Another help or meanes to get this holy importunity is this. To recollect thy thoughts by holy meditation, before thou comeſt to this weighty duty of prayer to God; And upon this ground we finde meditation and prayer to be put together. *Pſal.* 5. 1, 2. *Give eare to my words O Lord, and conſider my meditation, give eare unto my prayer oh God and my King; for unto thee will I pray.* Davids prayer you

2. *Help.*

Pſal. 5. 1, 2.

שוח you see is usherd in with meditation. The same word in the Hebrew signifies both to meditate, and to pray. You finde concerning *Isaac*, *Gen.* 24. 26. *Isaac went out into the fields to meditate*, some read it; *to pray*, others translate; It is likely he did both first meditate, and then pray: Be much imployed in the worke of meditation, if you would have your hearts much enlarged in prayer. Meditate in to whose presence you come, what a glorious God he is, before whom you are to appeare.

Gen. 24. 26.

2. Meditate in whose name you are to come, and to pray, by whom you must have accesse to the throne of grace.

3. Meditate what chiefe mercies you want, and are to beg, what grace you would have strengthned, what lusts you would have quelled, what doubts you would have satisfied, what sins you would have pardoned, in a word, what blessings you would have God to bestow upon you. The meditation of these things must needs give a man more scope, and stirre up a mans affections in prayer.

3. *Help.* 3. If you would get this holy importunity, you must recall your thoughts from worldly and distracting cares, when you come to prayer. The Apostle therefore doth exhort the Corinthians, 1 *Cor.* 7. to free themselves from, and rid their hard-

1 Cor. 7.

hands of the cares of the world, and he gives this as a reason, that they may attend upon the Lord without distraction. The cares of the world will eat out that good that is in the hearts of men, will rob a man of that freedome and enlargement, that otherwise he might have in prayer. *Anselme*, as he was walking in the fields, saw a shepheards boy tie a stone to a birds legg, and as the bird sought to flie up, ever and anon, the stone pulled it down again. The spirituall interpretation that he partly made, and that we may make, is this; when the soule would mount aloft in prayer, and grow fervent, the cares of the world pluck it down, and coole it. And therefore you must labour to free your selves from these incombrances. You must doe as *Abraham* did, when he went to sacrifice, he left his servants and cattell at the bottome of the hill: So when you goe to offer to God the sacrifices of prayer, you must get above the impediments and distractions of this present life. That is the third help.

4. *Help.*

Another way to get this holy importunitie, is to watch the heart in prayer. *Colos.* 4. 2. *Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving.* There is a watching to prayer, and a watching in praying. A watching to prayer is, when a man

Colos. 4. 2.

man watcheth his heart, and sees that he doth not omit duties, and there is a watching in prayer, of which I am now speaking. Now there are foure enemies, that a man must watch against in prayer.

1. Watch against drowsinesse of body. This is a great impediment of prayer, and we have great need to watch against it.

2. Watch against a deadnesse and dulnesse of spirit, against a flat and low temper, that is a great hinderance of importunitie.

3. Watch against Satanicall suggestions; Satan is alwayes ready to assault thee, he watcheth to disturbe and molest you in your prayers, you had need watch to counterworke him.

4. You must watch from secular distractions. All these adversaries you must watch against, and that is the way to get this holy importunitie into your hearts.

5. *Help.* 5. If you would get this holy importunity, you must labour to stirre up all your affections, when you come to pray. This you finde was the practise of holy *David, Psal.* 103. 1. *Bless the Lord O my soule, and all that is within mee praise his holy name.* See how this good man doth muster together all the faculties of his soule, how he calls up all his strength, all that he is or can doe to set forth the name of God. So the Apostle *Peter in his first epistle*

Psa. 103. 1.

chap. 1.

chap. 1. *ver.* 13. *exhorts those* to whom he writes, *to gird up the loynes of their mindes.* A Christian going towards heaven, is compared to a man that is going a journey; now a man that is going a journey, he girts up his cloathes together about his loynes, that nothing may hinder him in his journie. To this the Apostle alludes, when he bids them gird up their loines. So the like you have *Luke* 17. 8. *Gird up thy selfe, and serve me.* It is an expression of a master to his servant. God is our master, we are his servants, we are to doe his worke while we be in the world. To that end let us gird up our loines, let us gather our affections together, that we may be the more fit for, and the more vigorous in the worke. A discinct and ungirt minde is not fit for prayer; in ancient times at the first assemblings, and Church-meetings, the Deacons cryed, Let us pray, let us attend. There are many that pray, and doe not attend to prayer, many pray, as if they prayed not; if therefore we would pray, indeed, we must attend to it, we must stirre up all that is within us, to call upon the name of the Lord.

1 Pet. 1. 13.

Luke 17. 8.

Oremus, attendamus.

6. If you would get this holy importunitie, then you must store your hearts with fulnesse of matter, when thou goest to prayer; It is emptinesse of Spirit that causeth deadnesse of heart. 7. If

6. *Help.*

7. Help.

7. If you would get this holy importunitie, bemoane the deadnesse and dulnesse of thy heart. This was the course that holy *David* tooke, *Psal.* 38. 9. *My desires oh Lord are before thee, and my groaning is not hid from thee.* So it was the practise of the Church, *Isa.* 63. 17. *O Lord why hast thou made us to erre from thy wayes, and hardened our hearts from thy feare.* So it was the way that *Ephraim* went in, *Jer.* 31. 18. *I have heard Ephraim bemoaning himselfe. Thou hast chastised mee and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke.*

Isai. 63. 17.

Jer. 31. 18.

Ver. 19. *Surely after that I was turned, I repented, and after that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh: I was ashamed, yea even confounded, because I did beare the reproach of my youth.* God doth love to heare his people mourning over, and bewailing their wants and weaknesses, and that is one necessary requisite in an acceptable prayer. Bewaile therefore thy dulnesse, consider that prayer without this holy importunity, is like a messenger without legs, as an arrow without feathers, an advocate without a tongue. St *Jerome* complained very much of his distractions and dulnesse in prayer, and chid himselfe thus: What doest thou thinke that *Jonah* prayed thus when he was in the whales belly, or *Daniel* when he was among the Lions, or the thiefe, when

Siccine putas orasse Jonam, sic Danielem inter leones, sic latronem in cruce?

when he was upon the crosse? Bemoane your want of importunity, if you would get this importunitie. And so much shall suffice for the helps or meanes to get importunitie. And so I have dispatcht all those particulars propounded in the beginning, I now come to the application of the point.

Use of Caution.

I shall apply it by way of Caution, to prevent severall mistakes in the world about this holy importunity. And there are two sorts of mistakes. There are some that thinke they have this importunitie when they have it not. And there are others that thinke they have not this importunitie, when indeed they have it. Both these mistakes I must labour to rectifie.

1. Caution.

1. There are some that thinke they have this importunitie, when they have it not. Every man by nature is proud of his own parts and abilities, and apt to thinke that he hath more grace then indeed he hath. And here there are foure mistakes, or if you will, foure grounds of this great mistake. Many conceit they have importunitie, when indeed they have it not.

To those that think they have importunity upon false grounds.

1. Because they are fluent in their expressions in prayer.

2. Because they have some stirring of the affections in prayer.

3. Because God gives them the mercy they aske.

4. Because

4. Because they pray by heart and not by book. Now all these are false grounds, and therefore I shall endeavour to disprove them in order.

First false ground confuted.

The first ground of this deceit is this. There are some that conceive they have this importunitie, because they have multitude of words, and variety of expressions in prayer.

Now this is no just ground for a man to conclude, that he hath this holy importunitie, in foure cases.

1. 1. In case expressions come from the strength of naturall gifts, and parts, and not from saving grace. A man may have a strong memory, and volubilitie of tongue, and good naturall abilities, and yet all this while fall far short of this gracious importunitie.

2. 2. In case thou art full in expression, but emptie in affection. There are many men whose words doe outstrip their hearts, and their expressions exceed their affections. So did they, *Isa.* 29. 13. *Forasmuch as their people draw neare mee with their mouth, and with their lips doe honour me; but have removed their heart far from mee.* Some men are like boyling water, when it boiles fastest, and boiles out of the top, then there is nothing at the bottome; All their prayers are at the top, in their mouth, and not in their heart and affections.

Their affections doe not carrie equipage with their words.

3. In case thy importunate expressions be more used in company, then in secret, it is a signe thou hast not this holy importunitie, but it comes from popular applause. It is not so with the people of God. Christ speaks to his people, *Cant.* 8. 13. *Thou that dwellest in the gardens, the companions hearken to thy voice, cause mee to heare it*; to shew, that they should not onely pray, and be importunate when the companions hearken to their voice, when they are in company, but even then when no eye sees them, when no eare heares them, when none is present, but God alone; God expects that we should pray in secret, as well as in company. 3.

4. In case thy fluencie of expressions doe make thee conceited of thy selfe, and of thy gifts, and to sleight the gifts of other men, this is an argument thou hast not this holy importunitie; for that makes a man humble, and low in his own eyes. When a man comes to despise other men, and exalt himselfe above his brethren, this is a token thy importunitie comes not from a right principle. And so I have disproved the first false ground, upon which many conceit they have this importunity. 4.

A second false ground confuted.

2. Another false ground upon which

men conceive they have this importunitie, when they have not, is this; Because they finde in themselves some stirrings in their affections in prayer to God. But this is no just ground for that opinion in these cases.

1. 1. In case thine affections are more stirred up, for the removall of affliction upon thee, then corruption within thee. As it was with the Mariners in *Jonah*, they cried mightily unto God, but what was it for? not that they might be delivered from their sins and corruptions, but that God would bring them safe out of that tempest wherein they were.

2. 2. In case thine affections be kindled by a false Principle, as by popular applause, or vaine glory, and not by the Spirit of God.

3. 3. In case thy affections are more drawn out after pardoning mercy, then subduing grace. A man whose conscience is awakened, may be so far rouzed with the feare of hell, that he may be very earnest to have sin pardoned, out of a meere principle of selfe-love.

4. 4. If these stirrings be fading; There are many that have a flushing in their affections, that have no standing affections in their hearts. They are like a man in a fever, that when the distemper is on him, he may be stronger by farre, then he is

is in his ordinary course; now this is not the naturall strength of the man, but onely the violence of his distemper, and the decay of nature. Just so the violence that some men have, doth not argue a strength of grace, but a decrease of grace rather. And so much for the second ground of that mistake.

A third ground upon which many mistake, is this. Because God gives them the mercy they aske: Now they thinke God would not give them what they ask, if he did not hear and accept their prayers: But neither is this a good ground, and that for these reasons. A third ground confuted.

1. God may give you mercy, not as a returne of prayer, but as a fruit of his generall providence, whereby he doth take care for all his creatures; God giveth meat even to the Ravens that crie unto him. The Lord gives to every thing their meat in due season. God heares the cries of the meanest of all his creatures in the time of need. 1.

2. God may hear thee, and grant thy request in wrath, and not in mercy; So it was with the Israelites; they were weary of that government that God had set over them, and they were very importunate to have a King; Nothing would satisfie them but a King. They refused to heare the voice of *Samuel*, and said, nay, but we 2.

will have a King. Well, God hearer their requeſt, and grants it, and gives them a King. Might they thence conclude, ſurely their prayers were accepted of God, becauſe God did give them what they deſired? No, God tells us the quite contrary, *Hoſea* 13. 11. *I gave thee a King in mine anger.* So in the 78. *Pſal.* The Iſraelites were very deſirous of meat. God heard them; *Verſe* 29. 30, 31. *So they did eat and were filled, for he gave them their own deſire. They were not eſtranged from their luſt; but while the meat was in their mouthes, the wrath of God came upon them, and ſlew the fatteſt of them, and ſmote down the choſen men of Iſrael;* So that Gods giving of a man the mercie he wants, is no argument to a man, to conclude that God accepts his prayers.

3. 3. If God hath heard thee, it may be it is in temporall favours, but not in ſpirituall mercies. God gives thee a temporall mercie, but he denies thee ſpirituall mercies. It may be thou haſt begged riches, and God hath granted thee this requeſt, to make thee rich in the world; It may be thou haſt deſired honour, and thou art raiſed to places of honour; But remember thou doeſt beg Chriſt, thou doſt beg grace and glory; if God doth not give thee theſe, thou ſhalt never ſee the face of God; and conſider, what will all theſe doe thee good? They will but feed thee fat

ſit for the day of ſlaughter, and make thee a ſweet morſell for wormes and Devills. Now conſider, what benefit this will be to thee, to have riches, pleaſures, and worldly contentments, and they prove a ſnare to thee. So then it is no juſt ground for a man to conclude, that he hath prayed aright, becauſe God hath anſwered him. That is the third ground.

A fourth ground of mens preſumption, of the goodneſſe and acceptableneſſe of their prayers is this; they pray by heart, and not by booke, they uſe not ſet formes, they pray *ex tempore*. But this alſo is but a falſe ground, as appeares by theſe conſiderations. A fourth ground confuted.

1. It is poſſible, and uſuall too for men to pray without booke, and yet without heart too. A man may pray a third way, he may pray, and yet neither pray with books, nor with heart, he may pray by the ſtrength of naturall parts, as I told you even now.

2. A man may pray without a forme, and yet make but a formall prayer. A formall prayer is not to uſe a forme of words; for that Jeſus Chriſt did; he prayed three times, ſaying the ſame words. A man may poſſibly uſe a forme of words, and yet not be formall. And on the other, a man may be formall, and yet not uſe a forme of words; that is, he may pray,

and yet not have his heart and affections wrought upon in that prayer.

3. 3. Prayer is not a worke of the memory, invention or expreſſion, but a worke of the heart. Prayer doth not conſiſt in varietie of phraſes, or change of the method, and expreſſion uſed in prayer, but a worke on the affections. God doth not account that to be a prayer that doth not come from the heart, and is not accompanied with the heart; And therefore you finde this expreſſion concerning the Saints prayers formerly; *Hannah* poured out her ſoule before the Lord; and ſo the *Pſalmiſt*, he is ſaid to poure out his heart; and the Iſraelites are ſaid to poure out their hearts like water before the Lord. So that this proves to be a falſe bottome. And ſo much for the firſt uſe of Caution.

LUKE 11. 8.

I say unto you, though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity, he will rise and give him as many as he needeth.

VI. SERMON.

2. Caution. To those that think they have not importunity when they have.

2. His may be for caution to the godly, to prevent the mistakes of those, that have this importunitie, and thinke they have not; Yet here also they have some seeming reasons. I shall name them, and withall answer them.

1. Reason confuted.

Their first reason is this. Others pray better then I, saith a godly man. Others performe duties with more inlargednesse; Now this reasoning is not good.

1.

For 1. It may be those that thou apprehendest to pray better then thou, are of longer standing, and larger experience in the wayes of God then thou art. God

doth not expect any more from a man, but according to that measure of grace, that he gives the man, and according to his growth and standing in grace. *Paul* was not at all discouraged, because *Epinetus was the first fruits of Achaia unto Christ*, Rom. 16. 5. nor at *Andronicus* and *Junia, that were of note among the Apostles, and in Christ before him*, verse 7. And if *Paul* was not discouraged, why shouldest thou be discouraged to see other Christians outstrip thee, it may be they are of longer standing then thou.

Rom. 16. 5. verse 7.

2. It may be thou doest judge and compare thy selfe with others, at a great disadvantage. As first, it may be thou dost compare thy selfe, and thy praying in secret, with the praying of others in publick; Now this is very disadvantageous; for in publick men have not onely inward, but also outward incouragements, and so thorough the corruption that is in all our hearts, they are more drawne forth at that time then in secret.

2.

2. It may be thou dost compare their expression with thine affection, it may be there is more in thy affections, then in all the multitude of their expressions. Thou art not to compare thy affections with the multitude of other mens words.

3. It may be thou dost compare thy selfe with others, when they are at the best and

and highest, and thou at the worst and lowest. There is a great difference betwixt a man and himselfe, at severall times, now you judge unequally, if you compare your selfe in that manner.

3. In some cases this may be no discouragement to thee; as 1. If thou art weaker in naturall gifts. Though good affections flow from grace, yet good expressions proceed from the goodnesse of naturall abilities.

2. In case thou art not of as long standing in religion.

3. If thou hast lesser time and opportunities for prayer, by reason of necessary cares and encumbring employments. When *Jonah* was entered into the ship there was a great storme, in so much that the ship was ready to sinke: now all the Mariners were at prayer, every man cryed to his God, but *Jonah* was fast asleep, now one would have thought, that *Jonah* had been a most stupid man; but the reason was the greatnesse of his journey, a little before, which caused him to be so heavie to sleep. It may be a man that hath lesse grace then thou may pray better then thou, because he is not troubled with these worldly incumbrances, that thou art necessarily ingaged in. 3.

4. God doth not distribute gifts and graces to all alike, God hath not appointed 4.

pointed that all men ſhould grow in grace alike. To this purpoſe I may apply, *Nehem.* 11. 17. *Mattaniah the ſon of Micha, the ſon of Zabdi, the ſon of Aſaph was the principall to begin the thanksgiving in prayer, and Bakbukiah the ſecond among his brethren, and Abda the ſon of Shammuz* —— the third. God doth not intend that all ſhould be alike in grace, or gifts; God hath his firſt, ſecond, and third; one may fall ſhort of another, and yet all have truth of grace, yea, all have ſome growth in grace. Another may pray better, and yet thou pray well; Another may pray more affectionately, and yet thou pray as acceptably in the ſight of God: ſo much for Anſwer to the firſt reaſon.

Nehem. 11.17.

2. Many a poore ſoule may ſay, I can remember ſince I could pray better, and more largely. Now if I could pray better formerly then now, I am now grown remiſſe, and want this holy importunity. But this is no ſound reaſon; for

2. Reaſon confuted

1. It may be thou hadſt formerly more affection, but leſſe judgement, leſſe experience, leſſe ſpiritualneſſe in thy prayers. It may be now thou art more ſound in knowledge, thou makeſt a more inward progreſſe in holineſſe; thou canſt now make a more inward prayer to God, thou haſt now more inward communion with God. Now if this be ſo, thou haſt

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no cause to be discouraged. God loves a judicious prayer, as well as a large and affectionate prayer; you see what you want one way, you make up another way. A young carpenter gives more blowes, and makes more chips, but an old and experienced workman doth the most and the best worke. A young Musitian can play more quickly and nimbly upon an instrument, but an old Musitian hath more skill.

2. It may be when thou hadst more affections in prayer, thou hadst more sin in prayer, more pride in thy gifts, more dependance upon thy duties, more censoriousnes of others, and many other corruptions that did accompany thy prayers, and thy affectionatenesse in them. Now though thou hast lesse affections, yet those other corruptions are in great part eaten out. 2.

3. It may be thou hast not now so many helps and opportunities to keep up thine heart, to stirre up thine affections in prayer, as thou hadst formerly. It may be thou didst formerly live under the teachings of an able godly minister. Now thou hast lost that opportunity. And so there are severall other helps, that peradventure are now taken away from thee, 3.

4. Though it is true thou art abated, and thou didst pray better formerly then now, 4.

now, yet ought not this to be matter of discouragement to thee.

1. If it doth not proceed from a voluntary carelesseneſſe.

2. If it be not accompanied with hardneſſe and inſenſibleneſſe.

3. If it be not continued in with lazineſſe and contentedneſſe. And ſo much for anſwer to the ſecond reaſon.

A third Reaſon confuted.

3. Another ground of doubting to the people of God is this. They complaine they have not thoſe inlarged expreſſions in prayer, which Gods people uſe to have. For anſwer conſider theſe things.

1. 1. This hath many times been the caſe of Gods own people, that they have wanted expreſſions, they could not finde a vent for their affections. Thus it was with *Hannah*, ſhe ſpake in her heart, but ſhe was not able to expreſſe her ſelfe. So it was with holy *David*, *Pſal.* 77. 4. *I am ſo troubled that I cannot ſpeak*, and yet in the firſt verſe of that Pſalme, he tells us he *cried unto the Lord with his voice.* Here was an heart full of prayer, though he wanted utterance.

Pſal. 77. 4.

2. 2. It is better to have affections without expreſſions, then expreſſions without affections. God lookes more to the deſires of the heart then the words of the mouth. It may be what thou wanteſt of expreſſion, is made up in affection.

3. I

3. It may be what is wanting in words, is made up in life; as thou art defective in expression, so thou makest a recompence in conversation; and that is the best expression that can be. It is much better to live a prayer then to expresse a prayer. It is good to pray for grace, but it is better to live a life of grace. It is good to pray against sin, but it is better to live against sin. 3.

And so much for answer to the third doubt.

A fourth ground of doubting is this: Many a disconsolate Christian is apt to say, I am troubled with wandring thoughts; with deadnesse and dulnesse of heart in prayer. A fourth Reason confuted.

I confesse thy case is sad, and to be lamented for, and it is just matter of humiliation: Yet even here is matter of comfort.

1. If thou dost what thou canst, to free thy self from wandrings before thou comest to pray. 1.

2. If thou dost what thou canst to resist these wandrings when you are come before God in prayer.

3. If you be sensible of these wandrings afterward. If you can say, you do these three things, your wandrings shall never be laid to your charge.

And thus I have done with both these Uses

Use of Caution. And so I have done with the principal Doctrine, which was this, *That an holy importunity, and earnestness of spirit, is a condition required in the prayers of Gods people, if they expect returns thereunto.*

There is another considerable Doctrine yet behinde, taken from the amplification of the concession: He asked but three loaves; *but because of his importunity, he gave him as many as he needed.*

Doct. 4. God is better then our prayers.

The observation thence is this; *That when the heart is importunate in begging mercy, God usually gives us more than we pray for.*

In the handling of this Doctrine, I shall

1. prove it by Scripture-instances.
2. I shall lay down the reasons of it.
3. I shall answer some objections, and cases of conscience; and so I shall come to application.

1. I shall prove it by Scripture instances.

1. You have the instance of *Hannah*, 1 Sam. 1. She beg'd a son with much importunity, being a woman of a sorrowful spirit for want of a son; Well, God returns her an answer. *Chemnitius* observes, that *Hanna* asked a son, and God gave her a Prophet. She begged a son, God gave her a gracious son; a son greatly beloved of God. She asked a single mercy, and God gave her a double blessing.

Petijt Filium, accepit Prophetam.

Another instance you have in *Abraham*, Gen.

Gen. 17. *Abraham* prayed, *O that Ishmael might live in thy sight.* Well, what answer doth God return? That you have vers. 19. *Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed, and thou shalt call his name Isaac, and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him.* It was *Abrahams* desire that *Ishmael* might live. Now God, not onely grants that, but hee grants him a better mercy. Gen. 17. Vers. 19.

Another instance you have in the Canaanitish woman, Matth. 15. who did importunately beg of Christ, the life and health of her daughter. Christ answered her thus, *Be it unto thee even as thou wilt.*

Now if you ask what is the reason, why God deals thus with his people? I answer.

1. This proceeds from the largeness and greatness of Gods power, and the riches and freeness of his grace towards us; Ephes. 3. 20. *Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly, above all that we are able to ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us.* A man may ask of another man, and it may be receive; but then hee must not aske again: but herein appears the power and ability, the goodness and bounty of God; if we ask of him once or twice, he is a God that is able to give, not according to our asking onely, but above what we ask; and not onely above what we can ask, but above what we can ask or think. *Reas.* 1. Ephes. 3. 20.

think. The words are so full, that they cannot well be expressed, God doth *more then excessively*. God hath not onely a fulnesse of abundance, but of redundancy; not onely of plenty, but bounty; he is better then our prayers.

ὑπὲρ ἐκ περισσοῦ.

Reas. 2. 2. God will do this, to relieve his people, and to supply their spiritual wants. Among the wants of Gods people, this is one, that *we do not know what we need, nor what we should pray for as we ought*, Rom. 8. 26. Therefore God supplies our wants, not onely in what we ask, but in what we want, though we do not ask it, nor pray for it.

Rom. 8. 26.

So much for the Reasons; I come now to answer some objections.

Object. 1. But some may say, What priviledge hath a godly man more then a wicked man, to have more to be given him then he doth ask, seeing we read of wicked men that *they do prosper in the world, and have more then heart can wish*? Psal. 73. I answer.

Psal. 73.

Answ. 1. 1. It is true in temporal mercies: God may give wicked men more then the godly, and more then their heart can wish; but God doth not give them spiritual mercies: As we may see in *Balaam*: God gave *Balaam* honours and riches, but *Balaam* cried out, *O that I might dye the death of the righteous*, This God did not grant him. So, many wicked men do say in a general way, *Lord*

pardon

pardon my sins; God doth not hear them. It may be a child of God, may ask of God temporal mercies, and God will give him spiritual mercies; this is more then he did ask, and that much better then he gives to wicked men.

2. Though God doth give unto wicked men more then their hearts can wish, yet God doth not give it as any return of prayer, but onely as fruits of general and common providence, as they are his creatures, whom he will preserve. 2.

3. God may give wicked men more then their hearts can wish, and this is not in mercy, but in wrath. They may receive mercies, but not as mercies, not in mercy. And there are four demonstrations when God hears a man in wrath. 3.

1. When he asks any thing of God that is sinful in its own nature; as the denial of it is an act of mercy, so the grant of it is a fruit of Gods anger. God doth many times give those things in his anger, which he denies when he is well pleased. God will not hear his own people according to their wills, but according to his own will. It is in this case, as it is with a father, when his child, for want of knowledg, asks a knife of him, by which he may cut his fingers; the father will not give him the knife, except it be in wrath. So a man may ask mercies at the hand of God, and it may 1.

Concedit iratus, quod negat propitius.

be God will give them in wrath to cut themselves with them.

2. 2. If you ask those things of God, which though they are not sinful in their own nature; yet if thy asking of these lawful things be to an unlawful end, God will deny these in mercy; and when he gives them it is in wrath. As if thou desirest temporal mercies to abuse them to drunkenesse, or to live in any other sin and wickednesse; if God give thee those mercies, tis as a testimony of his wrath to thee. So it was in the 78. Psalm v. 18. Psal. 78. 18. *They tempted God in their hearts, and asked meat for their lust.* There was the end of their desires. They desired a lawful thing for unlawful ends; But what followed? The wrath of God: *For while the meat was in their mouthes, the wrath of God came upon them,* vers. 30, 31. V. 30, 31.

3. 3. If you ask any thing of God, and he gives it in wrath, you may know by this; if it be an occasion of sin to thee, it is given thee in wrath. So it was with the Israelites, even now mentioned, the meat that God gave them proved an occasion of sin, vers. 32. ——— *they sinned still, and believed not his wondrous works.* When the mercies you enjoy becomes fuel to your lusts, those mercies are accompanied with the curse and wrath of God; and this using of mercies will turn to the aggravation of wrath. Vers. 32.

4. Mercies

4. Mercies are given thee in wrath, when the enjoyment of them hinders thee from the receit of greater mercies from God. Thus it was with the Devils, Matth. 8. 31, 32. They besought Christ that they might go into the Herd of Swine: Christ granted them that, he let them enter into swine, that they might not enter into men. When the giving of temporal mercies, hinders thee from the receit of spiritual mercies, they are given in wrath. There are many men to whom God gives temporal mercies, they have riches in abundance, pleasure at will, every thing they can desire; but these mercies take off their thoughts and affections from better things; by getting these they loose Christ, and grace, immortality, and eternal happinesse. Now in these cases, though God doth give mercies, yet they are given in wrath; and so notwithstanding this objection, the privilege of Gods people, is much greater then the privilege of wicked men.

4. Mat. 8. 31, 32.

But it may be further objected and enquired; If this be so, that mercies are given to wicked men in wrath, and by a common providence, *How may I know when mercies come to me as returns of prayers?*

Quest. When mercies are returns of prayers.

Now I shall answer that in these particulars.

1. Mercies are returns of prayer, when the receiving of mercy is a means to

Answ. 1.

quicken the heart to beg for other mercies at the hands of God: when the mercy shall make thee more to love prayer, more to use prayer. This you finde proved by *Davids* experience, Psal. 116. 2. *Because he hath heard my voice, therefore will I call upon him as long as I live.* You see here, because God had heard *Davids* prayer, and given him the mercy he begged, he makes an argument, and an engagement to himself to pray as long as hee lived. So that to continue prayer, is a means to get more mercy; and the leaving off of prayer when you have a mercy, is a means to loose that which you have obtained at the hands of God. But as for the wicked it is not so with them. Mercies received onely from a common, or general providence, have no such efficacy, as you may see, Job 21. 7, 8, &c. there *Job* tells you, —*the wicked live, become old, yea, mighty in power: Their seed is established in their sight with them, and their off-spring before their eyes. Their houses are safe from fear, neither is the rod of God upon them. Their bull gendereth, and faileth not, their cow calveth, and casteth not her calf.* And so he goes on, describing that happy condition that wicked men were in, and how God followed them with mercy after mercy. Well, what was the effect of this? Did this engage them to call upon God? Did this make them in love with prayer? No, it had a quite contrary

Psal. 116. 2.

Job 21. 7, 8, &c.

contrary effect, verſ. 14. *Therefore they ſay unto God, Depart from us; for we deſire not the knowledg of thy waies.* And verſ. 15. *What is the Almighty, that we ſhould ſerve him? and what profit ſhould we have if we pray unto him?* Verſe 14. Verſ. 15.

2. Mercies that are given as returns of prayer, do not onely make a man conſider that they are from God, but drawes the heart to God, and put a man upon imploying them in the ſervice, and to the honour of God. This we finde to be the temper of *Hannah*, 1 Sam. 1. 27, 28. *Hannah* had prayed for a child, God gave her a ſon. Now what doth ſhe with this mercy? Obſerve, *For this child I prayed, and the Lord hath granted my petition, ——Therefore have I lent him to the Lord; as long as hee liveth.* Seeing God hath heard my prayer and granted my requeſt, therefore will I give this mercy to God, to be imployed in this ſervice. So 1 Joh. 3. 22. *And whatſoever we aſk we receive of him, becauſe we keep his commandements, and do thoſe things that are pleaſing in his ſight.* You ſee it is made an evidence, that what we receive is received as an anſwer to our askings; becauſe we make thoſe mercies helps to obedience to keep Gods commandements. But now mercies that come from a common providence, do not draw out the heart towards God; they rather draw them out towards ſin; as it was in the forementioned Iſraelites, Pſalm 78. 2. 1 Sam. 1. 27, 28. 1 Joh. 3. 22.

though God did give them their hearts desire, yet were they not estranged from their lust.

3. 3. Mercies come from God as returns of prayer, when they make you more to rejoyce in the God that hears your prayers, and gives you the mercy, then in the mercy you receive from God. Thus you finde it was in *Hannah*, she asked a son, and God gave her a son, yet she saith, 1 Sam. 2. 1. *My heart rejoyceth in the Lord.* God gave her a son, she rejoyced in that mercy, but she rejoyced more in the God that gave it. So it was with *David*, Psal. 85. 6. *Wilt thou not revive us again, that thy people may rejoyce in thee?* We will not rejoyce chiefly in the mercy, but in thee. But on the contrary, those that receive mercies out of the basket of common providence, they rejoyce more in the mercy then in the God of mercy; they rejoyce in their wealth and glory, in the multitude of their riches; but as for God they bid him depart from them; they cannot rejoyce in God.

1 Sam. 2. 1.

Psal. 85. 6.

LUKE 11.8.

Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend: yet because of his importunity, he will,&c.

VII. SERMON.

4. MErcies that are the fruits of prayer, are known by this, He that hath them, ascribes them not to his own industry, but to the grace and mercy of God. Thus it was with *Sampson*, Judg. 15. when hee was ready to dye for thirst, he prayed unto the Lord, and God clave an hollow place in the jaw-bone, and gave him water. Now *Sampson* calls the name of the place *Enhakkore, the well of him that prayed*: he ascribes it to the return of his prayers; to that assistance that God gave him to pray. So *Hannah* ascribed her mercy to God, not to her self. But now a wicked man that receives mercies from Gods general providence.

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dence, his language is, This I have laboured for; this I have ventured my life for; this my friends left me; this I got by my forecast, providence, & industry: thus they sacrifice to their own nets; but seldom say, This is the return of prayers, this is the gift of God.

5. 5. That mercy that is given as a return of prayer, is enjoyed with more inward quiet, and contentment of minde, then when it is given in by generall providence. When *Eli* told *Hannah* that she should have a son, and that her prayer was heard, she had so much inward joy and contentment of minde, that is said, *Hannah went away rejoycing; and her countenance was no more sad:* The consideration of that made her very much to rejoyce. The reason is, because mercies that are given in as returns of prayer, they are given in with a blessing, and inward quietness and contentment of minde. The mercies that God gives his own people, he gives them with joy and comfort, Prov. 10. 22. *The blessing of the Lord maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow to it.* You read, 1 Chron. 4. 10. *And Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying, O that thou wouldest bless me indeed, and enlarge my coasts, and that thy hand might be with me, and that thou wouldest keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me.* Jabez knew that it was the manner of God, when he gave blessings as returns of prayer, not to add

Prov. 10. 22.

1 Chron. 4. 10.

grief

grief to it. *Isaac* he prayed for his wife, and God gave her to him to be a great comfort to him. It may be wicked men have wives and no content with them, but sorrow added to them, because they did not pray for them as *Isaac* did; they have children, but sorrow with them; and abundance of riches, and sorrow added to that; and all because they have not the mercies as returns of prayer. The mercies that are given in a way of general providence, usually are accompanied with vexatiousnesse and discontent, snares and sorrowes mingled with the mercies. So it was, Psal. 106. 15. *He gave them their requests, but he sent leanness into their souls.* God gives wicked men indeed their requests; but how is it, with a blessing and with content? No, no such matter, they have a curse with it. You know *Saul* gave *Mikbal* to *David* to be a snare to him, a crosse and discontentment. So doth God many times, in just judgement, give his blessings to wicked men, to be snares, and curses and crosses to them. Psal. 106. 15.

6. Mercies that come as returns of prayer, may be known by this, If they are given in the time, when God doth draw out thine heart to seek him in holy duties. An instance of this you have, *Act.* 12. While the Church was met to pray for *Peters* enlargement, the prison-doors were opened; and 6. Act. 12.

and he came and knocked at the door of the house, where they were assembled. This was an evident signe, that God gave in Peter to them as a return of prayer. So Act. 4. 31. *When they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost.* — You read, Joh. 4. 52, 53. That the Noble man enquired diligently, concerning the time wherein the child began to recover; and when he understood that, he knew it was a return of his prayer, and a fruit of Christs love. God tells his people, Isa. 65. 24. *Before they call I will answer, and while they are yet speaking I will hear.* Thus we read in the Book of Martyrs, That the people of God did make it a signe of Gods answering our prayers, when God was pleased to give in mercies to them, at the time wherein they prayed. Thus we read of *Luther*; That there was a young man that had made a Covenant, and sealed a Bond with his own blood, to give himself, soul and body to the Devil; onely to live in pleasure, and to do and have whatsoever he did desire. And when the time of the Bond was almost out, he being much troubled in his minde, came to *Luther* and told him what he had done, and what was like to befal him upon it. Whereupon, *Luther* called the Church together, and kept a solemn Fast in the behalf of the young man: And whilest that *Lu-*

Act. 4. 31.

Joh. 4. 52, 53.

Isa. 65. 24.

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ther was in prayer, being earnest with God, there was a great noise heard amongst them, and the Bond was cast into the lap of Luther, in the midst of the Congregation. And so for time to come, the young man did lead an holy and godly life.

7. And lastly, Mercies are given as answers of prayers, in case you make care and conscience, to perform to God those vowes which you made to God before you did enjoy the mercy. But when we promise God largely before we have the mercy, and when we have them, do not perform our vowes, it is an argument we have the mercies by general and common providence: Job 22. 27, 28. *Thou shalt make thy prayer unto him, and he shall hear thee; and thou shalt pay thy vowes: thou shalt also decree a thing, and it shall be established unto thee; and the light shall shine upon thy wayes.* When thou begest a mercy, and saiest, Lord give me such a mercy, and I will do thus and thus; I will walk so and so before thee, I will improve them to thy glory. Now when thou shalt thus ask for mercy, and make vowes to God, he will hear; but then thou must be sure to perform thy vowes. This frame of heart we finde to be in *David*, Psal. 66. 13, 14. *I will go into thine house with burnt-offerings, I will pay thee my vowes which my lips have uttered, and my mouth hath spoken when I was in trouble.* You see *David* was in

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Job. 22. 27, 28.

Psal. 66. 13, 14.

in trouble, and he prayed to God, and made some promises and vowes, in case God would deliver him. Now God did deliver him out of trouble, and hee did make good his vowes. Now here was a return of prayer. *David* you see did not grow secure and careleſſe, but he made conſcience to pay what he had promiſed to God. And ſo you ſee how you may diſcover, whether the mercies you receive from God be returns of prayer, or onely fruits of common and general providence. And ſo much for Anſwer to that Queſtion.

Object. 1. Another Objection, or caſe of conſcience is this; *How can this be true, that God gives his people more then they need, ſeeing it is the complaint of Gods people many times, that they have been a long time begging mercy, and God doth not give them ſo much as they deſire. Many ſay, I pray for pardon of ſin, and I cannot get it pardoned, and the pardon ſealed: I pray daily for power againſt my corruptions, and yet I cannot get my luſts ſubdued? What then ſhall I think of my prayers, may ſome poor ſoul ſay?*

Now to this I ſhall lay down ſeveral things, by way of anſwer.

Anſw. 1. 1. It muſt be conſidered, that God many times gets glory by the denials of his people; yea, he gets more glory by denying, then by the granting of a mercy. And if the denying of a mercy to thee, be the way to advance Gods glory; it is better that God

God should have his glory, and thou be without the mercy, then that thou shouldst have the mercy, and God want his glory. An eminent instance of this you have, Joh. 11. There was a prayer made by *Mary* and *Martha* for their brother *Lazarus*; And they came unto Jesus and said, *he whom thou lovest is sick*: But Jesus said, *This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God.* When Jesus Christ heard that he was sick, yet he staied two dayes in the place where he was, though he loved *Martha*, and he loved *Lazarus*, yet he stayed two dayes and would not go to him: but in the 14. verse, Christ said plainly, *Lazarus is dead: And I am glad for your sakes, that I was not there, to the intent that you might believe.* But they said unto him, *Lord, if thou hadst been here, he had not dyed.* Christ came and commanded them to role the stone away, *Martha* answered, *He hath been four dayes in the grave, and by this time he stinketh.* This was that that Christ aimed at: Christ knew that it was greater glory to him, to raise the dead out of the grave, then to raise him out of the bed of sickness: The power of his Godhead did more appear in the former then in the latter. And when *Martha* told him, *He stinketh*; Jesus answered, *Said I not unto thee, if thou didst believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God?* that is, thou shouldst see the power of my Godhead. This was the end of Christs denying Joh. 11.

denying of mercy, though it was earnestly desired.

2. 2. I answer, It may be thou dost not hear God in his commands, and then it is no wonder God doth not hear thee in thy prayers. If thou dost not hearken to the call of God, it may be expected that God should not hearken to thy call. See Prov. 1. 24. *Because I have called, and ye refused, I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded.* Compared with verse 28. *Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not finde me.* Mic. 3. 4. *Then shall they cry unto the Lord, but he will not hear them; he will even hide his face from them at that time, as they have behaved themselves ill in their doings.* Zach. 7. 13. *Therefore it is come to passe, that as he cryed and they would not hear, so they cryed, and I would not hear, saith the Lord of Hosts.* It may be God hath been calling upon thee this many years to believe and to repent; to be reformed, to forsake the evil of your doings; and thou hast not heatd his calling; his mercies have not drawn thee; his judgements have not affrighted thee: and is it not just with God to let thee call, and he not hear thee?

Prov. 1. 24.

Vers. 28.

Mic. 3. 4.

Zach. 7. 13.

3. 3. It may be thou dost ask but sleightly, and therefore thy prayers are not successful: As it is with a man, that asketh any thing of another man sleightly and coldly,

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he doth, as it were, desire him to say him nay. So when man askes mercies of God, carelesly and indifferently, this provokes God to give no answer. It may be thou prayest sleepily and drouzily, and with a wandring heart: And dost thou think God will hear that prayer, that thou dost not hear thy self? Dost thou think that God will accept of that prayer, when thou knowest not what thou sayest?

4. God may give thee a mercy, and thou through thy incredulity, impatiency, and inobservancie, not minde the returns that God gives. God may hear thy prayers, and yet thou not take any notice of it. This you may see in *Job*, Job 9. 16, 17. *If I have called and God answered, yet I will not believe that God hath heard me, because thou breakest me with thy tempest*—*Job* was in a fit of impatiency and unbelief. And though God did give him returns of prayer, yet hee would not, did not observe them. 4. Job 9. 16, 17.

5. God may deny thee the mercy, not that he is unable, or unwilling to hear thee or relieve thee; but to make thee the more desirous of, and so the more fit for mercy. It may be yet thou art not fit for an answer. The Philosopher beg'd some mony of *Antigonus*, he gave him a Drachme: He said, It is not for a King to give so little, a Talent had been a more sutable gift. The King replied, Though a Talent is fit for me to 5.

to give, yet thou art not fit to receive. So though God is alwaies fit and ready to give an answer to our prayers, yet we are not alwaies fit and ready to receive it. God bids us open our mouths wide, and I will fill it. God denies us, that we may open our mouths the wider, and enlarge our desires the more after mercy. The Lord doth by his people, as a father by his child; a father may seem to withdraw and hide himself from his child, to try its love to him; and the child begins to mourn and cry, yet the father comes not to the child; but when he hears the child cry aloud, then he comes to it and takes it up in his arms. So the Lord many times, sees his people pray, but he seems to withdraw from them, to hide himself from the prayers of his people; and goes as it were out of their sight, until they begin to cry aloud, to be very earnest and importunate in their prayers, till their desires be enlarged towards God; and then God graciously returns their prayers into their bosom. Now this is a very good reason, why God denies the prayers of his people. Desires defer'd, grow the stronger; but if the mercies be soon given, the desires grow cold, and the mercy growes contemptible. Mannah lightly come, is lightly set by. God doth by us as a Fisher-man doth, he drawes back the bait, that so the Fish may come after it

Desideria dilata crescunt: citò data vilescunt.

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the more eagerly, and bite the harder. God seemes to draw back a mercy, that wee may more earnestly pursue it.

6. Consider this that Gods people have prayed and waited a long time, before God hath given them the mercy they have asked, before God hath given them an answer of their prayers. God promised *Abraham* a son, that from him should proceed such an one, in whom all the families of the earth should be blessed, that his seed should be multiplyed as the starres in the firmament; and yet it was fifteene yeares betweene the time of Gods making him that promise, and the accomplishment of it. So likewise you finde it in *Zachariah* and *Elizabeth*, they prayed for a Childe at the first beginning of their marriage, now God did heare their cryes and prayers; yet he did not give them a returne till they were old and stricken in yeares. So likewise it was with the Church, *Lament.* 3. *vers.* 8. *Also when I cry and shout he shutteth out my prayer.* And *ver.* 44. *Thou hast covered thy selfe with a cloud, that our prayers should not passe through.* So also it was, *Hab.* 1. 2. *O Lord, how long shall I cry, and thou wilt not heare?* It was also the complaint of holy *David*, *Psal.* 22. 1, 2. *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring? O my God I cry in the day time and thou hearest not, and in the night season, and am not silent.* 6. Lam. 3. 8. Verse 44. Hab. 1. 2. Psal 22. 1, 2.

7. God may not onely deferre or deny to heare his peoples prayers, but in some times and cases be angry with the prayers of his people. *Psal.* 80. 4. *O Lord God of hosts, how long wilt thou be angry against the prayers of thy people.* So *Job* 30. 20, 21. *I cry unto thee, and thou doest not heare me. I stand up and thou regardest me not; thou art become cruell to me with thy strong hand, thou opposest thy selfe against me.*

Psal. 80. 4.

Job 30. 20, 21.

8. Consider this for thy comfort, that thy person may be accepted and thy prayers heard, and yet the thing thou prayest for not granted to thee. An instance of this you have in Christ himselfe, he prayed, *Father if it be possible let this cup passe from me*, Mat. 26. yet this cup did not passe from him, but he did drink of it, and yet it is said that Christ *was heard in all that he prayed for*, Heb. 5. 7. *Deut.* 3. ver. 23. *I besought the Lord at that time* (saith *Moses*) and ver. 26. *But the Lord was wroth with me for your sakes, and would not heare me: and the Lord said unto me, let it suffice thee, speake no more to me of this matter.* *Moses* did importunately desire that hee might see the Land, and goe over *Jordan* to possesse it. *Moses* was a godly man, and here he prayes for this mercy, but yet God was angry with him, & bad him pray no more. God bad him goe up into the Mount and see the Land, but told him he should not goe over. So when thou askest a particular mercy at the hand of God, God may deny them

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Mat. 26.

Heb. 5. 7.

Deut. 3. ver. 23.

them that mercy, and yet heare their prayers and accept their persons.

9. God may deny thee the mercy thou askest, and give thee a better in the roome of it, he makes you to open your mouthes the wider, that he may give you the greater mercies. *Abraham* prayed that *Ismael* might live. Now God did not heare his prayer in that as *Abraham* did desire it, but he gave him *Isaac*, and with him he established the Covenant, which was a better mercy. *Moses* was denied in his request to go into *Canaan*, but he was translated into a better place, into the true *Canaan*, the Kingdome of heaven. 9.

10. God may denie what we pray for in mercy, which should he grant it would be a token of his wrath; as if a man should aske that which was sinfull, or that which would be an unavoydable occasion of sin, or if he should aske it for sinfull ends, or in case a man ask that that would be a monument of his shame; all which cases I have spoken to before, and therefore shall now say no more. 10.

11. God may heare another mans prayers for thee, though he will not heare thine owne. This is a great comfort to every poore weake Christian in the world, they have a flock of prayers going for them to the throne of grace. You reade in *Job*, chap. 42. that God forbad his three friends to Job 42. 11.

pray, but bad *Job* pray for them, and told him, that he would heare him for them, ver. 8, 9. —— *goe to my servant Job, and offer up for your selves a burnt offering, and my servant Job shall pray for you, for him will I accept, least I deale with you after your folly, in that you have not spoken of me the thing that is right, like my servant Job.* And they did as God commanded them, and the Lord accepted *Job*, it may be there be times when you cannot pray, or when God will not heare your prayers, but remember you have a stock of prayers going for you. And thus much shall suffice by way of answer to this objection; I now come to make application.

Vers. 8, 9.

Luke 11.

LUKE 11. 8.

Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity, he will rise and give him, &c.

VIII. SERMON.

IN the first place, let me shew some Inferences or Corollaries from what hath been insisted upon.

1. Returnes to prayer are not given for the works sake, but for the persons sake. Though the matter of thy prayer may be good, yet if thou art not a good man, thou shalt not be accepted. God had respect first to *Abel*, & then to his offering. *Psal.* 34. 17. *The righteous cry, and the Lord heareth*— The person must be in a state of favour, before the dutie can be accepted. 1. Corollary. Psal. 34. 17.

2. Though prayers are not returned for the work, yet they are not returned without the work. God expects the worke, and the worke you must doe, though God will not have you to look for acceptance for the workes sake. 2. Corol.

3. Nor are returnes of prayer made to a 3. Corol.

person singly considered, but a member of Christ, as one that hath a share in his intercession. Joh. 15. 7. *If yee abide in mee — yee shall aske what you will, and it shall be given you.* So Joh. 16. 23. *Whatsoever ye aske the Father in my Name, that he will give to you.* All our prayers are but Cyphers, till Christs intercession be added. Cyphers in Arithmetick stand for nothing till a figure be added.

Joh. 15. 7.

Joh. 16. 23

4. The longer and the more thou hast prayed, the more affectionate should'st thou be in prayer. *Mat.* 6. 7. *Aske and yee shall have, seeke and yee shall finde, knock and it shall be opened unto you.* Observe the gradation in these words; Aske, but you must not stay there, you must seeke, nor yet must you rest satisfied there, you must knock. Your affections should be every day more eager and earnest, you should pray more fervently; as it is said of Christ, *Luk.* 22. 44.

Coroll. 4.

Mat. 6. 7.

Luk. 22. 44 ἐκτενέστερον προσηύχετο.

5. He can never pray importunately, that doth not pray daily; Intermission of dutie will quickly cause an interruption in thine affections, you must therefore pray in secret, pray fervently, pray morning and evening. And to stirre you up to and incourage you in this worke;

Coroll. 5.

1. Consider 1. The example of those holy men of God who have done thus. *Nehemiah* 1. 6. *Let thine eare now be attentive, and thine eyes open, that thou maiest heare the prayer of thy*

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Nehe. 1. 6.

thy servant which I pray before thee day and night. So you have the example of *Daniel*, *Dan.* 6. 10. ——*hee kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanker before his God, as he did before time.* It was a custome that he had observed of former time. Though he was a great Courtier, and a man full of great imployment, yet he would not neglect prayer. Nor was this an extraordinary fit but his ordinary course. So in *David*, *Psal.* 5. 3. *My voyce shalt thou heare in the morning, and in the evening will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will looke up.* So *Psal.* 88. 13. *But unto thee have I cryed, O Lord, and in the morning shall my prayer prevent thee.* So *Psal.* 119. 147. *I prevented the dawning of the morning, and cryed unto the Lord.* Psal. 55. 17. *Evening and morning and at noone will I pray and cry aloud.*

Dan. 6. 10.

Psal. 5. 3.

Psal. 88. 13

Psal. 119. 147.

Psal. 55. 17

2. You have the example of Jesus Christ himselfe, *Mark.* 1. 35. In the morning rising up a great while before day, he went out and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed, and so at evening. *Mat.* 14. 23. He went unto a mountaine to pray, and when the evening was come he was there also. And least you should thinke this was onely upon extraordinary occasion, it is said, *Luk.* 22. 3. *He came to the mount of Olives as he was wont. Joh.* 18. 2. *Jesus resorted thither with his Disciples.*

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Mark. 1. 35

Mat. 14. 23

Luk. 22. 3.

Joh. 18. 2.

3. Consider you have the very examples

3.

of Heathens in this. The Heathens sacrificed to *Hercules* morning and evening upon the great Altar at *Rome*.

4. 4. Consider that in the Lords Prayer, we are taught to pray every day. Christ did not bid us pray for bread, or things necessary for a moneth or a yeare, but day by day.

5. 5. This was prefigured in the Law, there was a daily offering to be given to God, a lamb at morning and a lambe at night, as you may see *Exod.* 29. 38, 39. Yea extraordinary sacrifices did not abolish this number, there was a burnt offering for the Sabbath, besides the continuall burnt offering, and the burnt offering at the beginning of the month, and the Passeover, and yet though these extraordinary workes were to be done, yet the ordinary were not to be left undone. So that you see here is good ground and encouragement for men to be frequent in these religious duties. And so much for the first.

Exod. 29. 38, 39.

Use 2. Caution.

6. This may be useful for the instruction of those 30 whom God hath given returnes of prayers, to whom God hath out of his bounty given more than they did aske. To such I must give, first, some negative cautions; secondly, some positive cautions.

1. Negative.

8. Some negative cautions, and that in foure regards.

1. Let

1. Let not Gods returnes to thy prayers make thee remisse and carelesse in the performance of duty. Beware of an empty heart when God brings in thy mercies with a full hand. Merchant adventurers, if they have good returnes, are incouraged to adventure their Ships to Sea againe: Our hearts are so base and disingenuous, that wee are apt, when we have what we seeke for, to seeke no more. O take heed of this, let not Gods goodnesse make you worse.

2. Another caution is this. Let not returnes to prayer make you conceited and proud of your gifts, or of your graces. Wee are too apt to reflect upon our selves, our parts, our graces, our abilities, and therefore we have more need to take heed of it. Beware that thine heart be not lifted up in pride against God, least God be provoked to lift up his hand against thee in judgement.

3. Take heed that you doe not ascribe the returnes of prayer to your owne importunitie, but mostly to the freenesse of Gods grace. Men are easy apt to sacrifice to their owne nets, and hurtle incense to their owne drags. Take heed of this: God cannot endure to have his glory given to another. Say rather, I have received a mercy, but alas there is nothing in me that could deserve it, all comes solely from the free grace of God.

4. Take

4. Take heed of returning againe to
Psal. 85. 8. sin after God hath returned thy prayers into thy bosome. *Psal.* 85. 8. *I will heare what the Lord God will speake, for he will speake peace to his people, but let them not turne againe to folly.* It would be both sin and folly in thee to returne to sin after God hath given thee an answer of peace. This was *Davids*
Psal. 6. 8. resolution for his owne particular. *Psal.* 6. 8. *Depart from mee all you workers of iniquitie.* Why, what is the reason? *The Lord hath heard the voyce of my supplication.* As if *David* had said, Ye wicked men, you have been occasions of sin to me, and companions in sin with me, but now that God hath been thus gracious to mee, now that God hath graciously returned my prayers, I will have no more to do with you: *Depart from mee, yee workers of iniquitie.* And so much for the negative Cautions.

Caution positive. I shall now lay down a few positive cautions.

1. If God hath returned thy prayers, see
Psal. 116. that thou bee'st more frequent in prayer then thou was formerly. This was the purpose of holy *David*, *Psal.* 116. *Because the Lord hath heard my prayer, therefore I will call upon him as long as I live.* So let it be your care to be more solemne and seriously to seek God then ever you have done.

2. 2. See that you be more full of praise to
God

God then you have been. Those mercies that thou hast won by prayer, are to be worn by thankfulness. Psal. 145. 10. *All thy works praise thee, O Lord, and thy Saints do bless thee.* All Gods works do praise him; *The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy work.* That is, they are all the passive monuments of Gods power in creating them: But the Saints they are agents in praising God. Blessing is more then praising: A picture praiseth him that made it; but it doth not bless him. The Saints, they bless God in a peculiar manner; their mouthes are full of the praises of God: They have a principle within them of praising God; they are agents in setting forth his praise. And therefore it is very fit that you should bless God.

Psal. 145. 10.

3. See that you be much in obedience: If God doth much for thee, see that thou do much for God. If God hath an hearing ear, thou must have a doing hand. And so much for the use of caution.

3.

3. I shall speak something by way of comfort.

Use 3. Comfort.

1. To such as have not this importunity, nor this return of prayer.

1.

2. To such as have returns to prayer.

2.

1. Here is a word of consolation to those that want this holy importunity; and that in three respects.

1.

1. Thou

1. Thou maiest pray with sincerity, when thou dost not pray with importunity. *The Lord*, saith David, *is nigh to all that call upon him*; but how? Not onely to them that call on him importunately, and powerfully, but to all that call upon him in truth; if thou canst say thou dost call upon God in truth, and with a sincere heart, God will be nigh unto thee.

2. It is the office of Christ to pray for thee in heaven, when thou dost not pray upon earth. It is the work of Jesus Christ to make intercession for thee to his Father. Although thou hast not importunity in thy self, yet consider, O believing soul, that Christ is in heaven importuning the Father for thee.

3. A sense and complaining of the want of this holy importunity, is accounted by God a degree of it. If you did never complain of the want of the Spirit, it was a signe you never had the Spirit: and now that you bewail the want of it, it is a signe you have it.

2. Branch. 2. Here is also a word of consolation, to those that have returns of prayer; and that in four respects.

1. 1. Thy mercies are double mercies: It is a mercy to have mercy, but to have it in such a way, is a double mercy, Psal. 91. *They shall call upon me, and I will answer them; and I will be with him in trouble, &c.* It is a

mercy

mercy to have deliverance out of trouble; but to have it through prayer, a deliverance that comes in by prayer, is a double mercy.

2. These mercies are sanctified mercies. Mercies as you are creatures are good, but as returns of prayer they are sanctified: And hereby mercies are much better to the soul that enjoyeth them. 2.

3. The mercies which thou hast as returns of prayer are costly mercies. Mercies that come in by providence, are easie and cheap, but mercies that come in by prayer are costly; they cost the price of Christs blood to purchase them; and they cost thee many a prayer and tear to obtain them. 3.

4. These mercies are sealing mercies, and that in three particulars, 4.

1. They are seals to you that you have the Spirit of God; for Christ hears no prayers, and no spirit, but his own. God is as well pleased with the barking of a dog, as with the prayers of a Christless man. 1.

2. It is a seal to thee of an interest in Christs intercession. If thy prayers are returned, it is a signe they are accepted. Now no prayers are accepted, but by vertue of the intercession of Jesus Christ. 2.

3. These returns are a seal of more mercies; a signe that thou shalt have more mercies from God. One mercie that is 3.

given

given in by prayer, is a pledg of another mercie; and thy mercie in this life, is a pledg to thee, that thou shalt have eternal happinesse in heaven to all eternity.

FINIS.